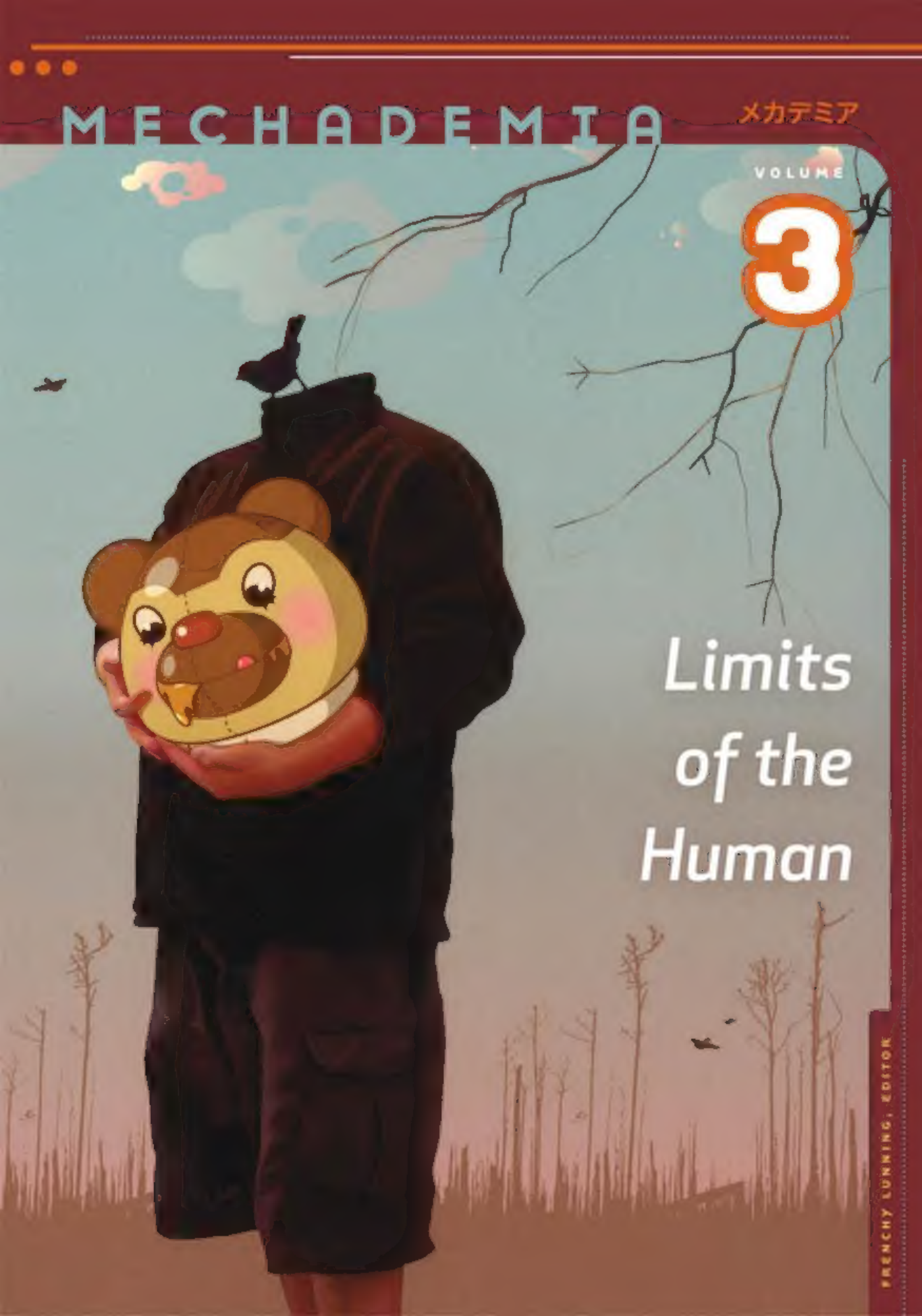
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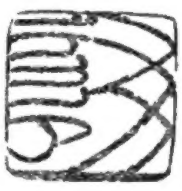


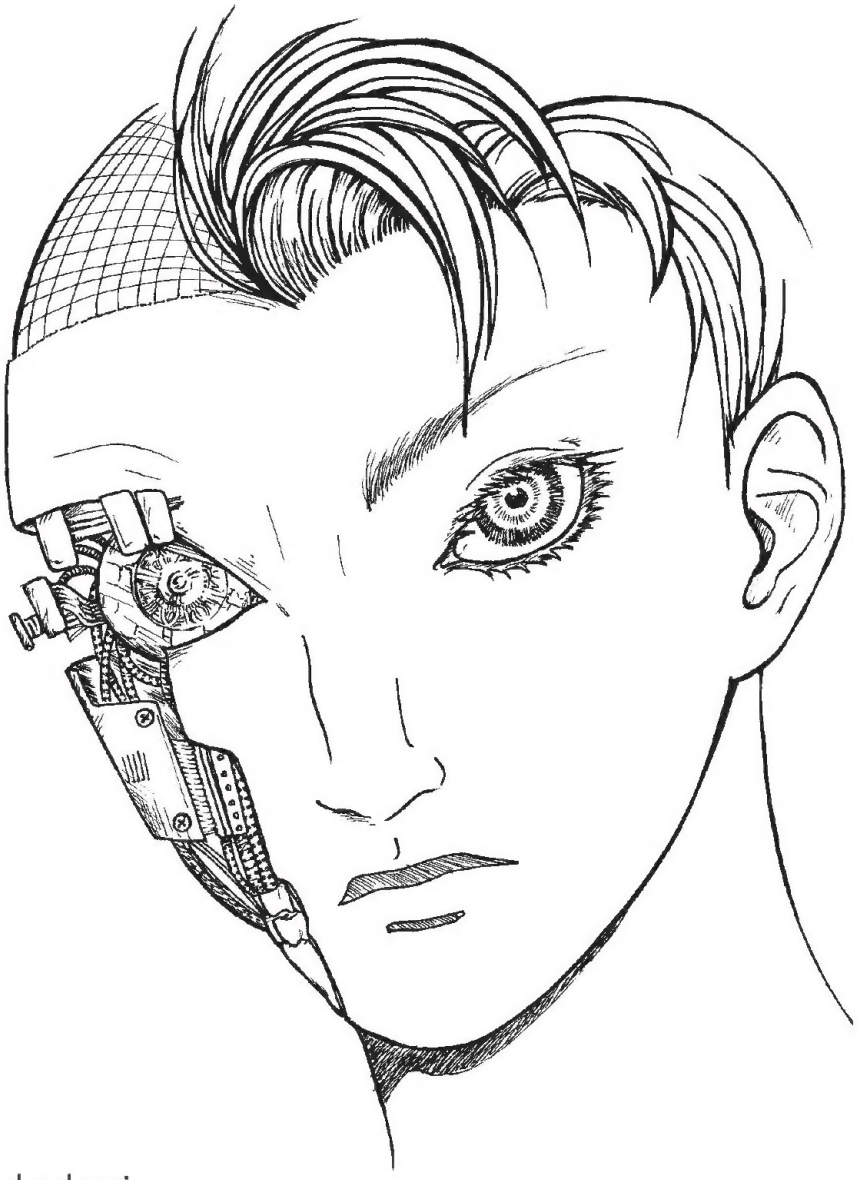
Limits of the Human

FRENCHY LUNNING, EDITOR

MECHADEMIA 3

Limits of the Human





Mechademia

An Annual Forum for Anime, Manga, and Fan Arts

FRENCHY LUNNING, EDITOR

Mechademia is a series of books, published by the University of Minnesota Press, devoted to creative and critical work on anime, manga, and the fan arts. Linked through their specific but complex aesthetic, anime, manga, and the fan arts have influenced a wide array of contemporary and historical culture through design, art, film, and gaming. This series seeks to examine, discuss, theorize, and reveal this unique style through its historic Japanese origins and its ubiquitous global presence and manifestation in popular and gallery culture. Each book is organized around a particular narrative aspect of anime and manga; these themes are sufficiently provocative and broad in interpretation to allow for creative and insightful investigations of this global artistic phenomenon.

MECHADEMIA 3

Limits of the Human

Frenchy Lunning, Editor

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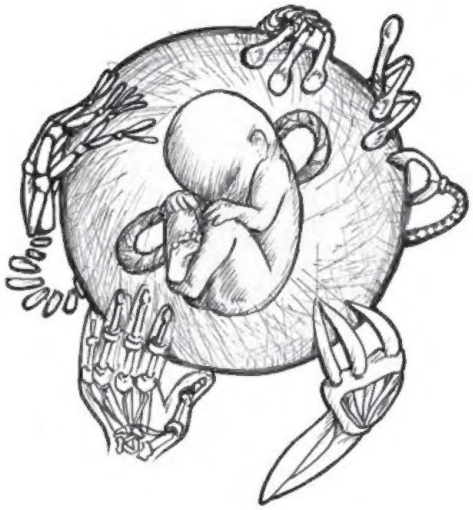
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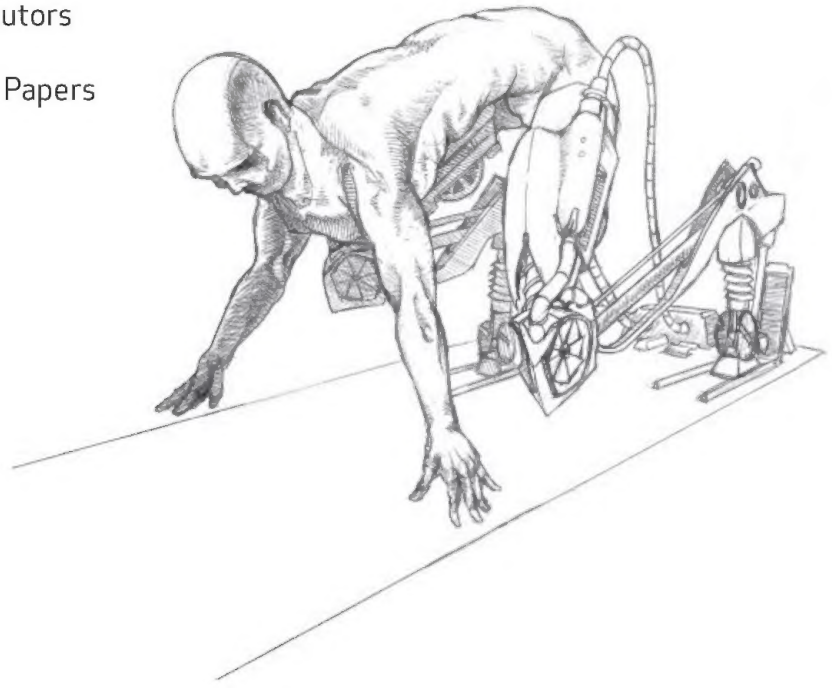
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Preface

FRENCHY LUNNING

THE LIMITS OF THE HUMAN

Everyone, regardless of his or her position in culture or location on the earth, is aware of a distinct shift in the idea of what is human. Those who fear this change rage against science and technology as the harbingers of what is, from another point of view, the inevitable evolution of humanity. Those who embrace this change are unsure of what to call this moment, how to summarize the movement, when to say, "This is it." And within this rupture in history, wars are being fought with these changes as the unspeakable, unsayable, unrecognizable, and unpronounceable subtext.

In our game, evidence of change and expanded notions of the human abound, and have for at least three decades. Japanese anime and manga have offered innumerable narratives of humans in transition and postulated brave new human concepts with a quietly profound creativity and dazzling art. There is a constellation of prototypes: from the cyber-person, whose amalgamation with technology offers myriad possibilities as well as certain pitfalls, to the grotesque, whose fuzzy yet noble additions require us to look differently toward ourselves and our fellow inhabitants, to the more subtle, more metaphorical (and often metafictional) intellectual and perceptual shifts that have dominated Western fiction in the past two decades.

This volume of *Mechademia* asked for a map of the terrain of the new humanities, using the cast of characters created for anime and manga as guides and the narratives as signposts to begin to discover how to speak, say,

recognize, and pronounce out loud these new limits and potentialities. The artists and authors of this issue speak from different positions and locations but sing of this evolutionary shift in a condensation of voices inspired by the narrative and artistic power of Japanese manga and anime.

With this map in hand, we hope for a new understanding and a new level of compassion for the Other, that the different, the emerging, the transitional be accorded a place at the table. We ourselves have been seen as different, as *otaku*. We should be among those who lead the way in an investigation of the new limits of the human.

This book owes its wonderfully crafted form to *Mechademia*'s associate editors, Christopher Bolton and Thomas LaMarre, who worked especially long and hard, beyond the call of duty, to assure its high quality and fascinating content.

Introduction

CHRISTOPHER BOLTON

THE LIMITS OF "THE LIMITS OF THE HUMAN"

As Frenchy Lunning points out in this volume's opening statement, the limits of the human constitute a theme that has been at the center of manga and anime for quite some time, but it is only relatively recently, with the explosion of academic interest in the posthuman, that criticism's attention has turned to this question, or at least to this formulation of its perennial questions.

It is tempting to summarize posthuman studies by enumerating various human/nonhuman dichotomies that characterize its different branches: biological versus mechanical, human versus animal (or monster), bounded self versus distributed field. If the machine, the creature, and the network constitute a trio par excellence of nonhuman others, then posthuman criticism might be defined as that which seeks to revise or overcome conventional notions of the human by blurring or erasing the lines that divide us from these nonhuman alternatives. Lunning's trio of the cyber-person, the fuzzy, and the *otaku* represent three of these posthuman hybrids, but these are points of excursion rather than destinations. While the essays in this volume are grouped largely according to these familiar hybrids and dichotomies, we note at the outset that enumerating the varieties of the nonhuman is an act that often threatens to reinstate convention and solidify the contours of the

IF THE MACHINE, THE CREATURE, AND THE NETWORK CONSTITUTE A TRIO PAR EXCELLENCE OF NONHUMAN OTHERS, THEN POSTHUMAN CRITICISM MIGHT BE DEFINED AS THAT WHICH SEEKS TO REVISE OR OVERCOME CONVENTIONAL NOTIONS OF THE HUMAN BY BLURRING OR ERASING THE LINES THAT DIVIDE US FROM THESE NONHUMAN ALTERNATIVES.

human rather than expand its boundaries. What Lunning and all the authors in this volume call us to do is to be open to the expansion or contraction of the human along entirely unexpected frontiers. This is the impulse behind the headings of the book's three sections: "Contours," "Companions," and "Compossibles." Each is intended to be descriptive in ways outlined below, but also unfamiliar, counterintuitive, productively strange. The critical manga that come between sections function in the same way, shifting media to shake loose new ideas: *The Signal of Noise* is an original reading of *Serial Experiments Lain* by Adèle-Elise Prévost, recast as a manga by Prévost and MUSEbasement. And Natsume Fusanosuke's pioneering critical manga *Komatopia* is an effort not just to illustrate a textual argument but to think and argue visually.

The uncertain territory of the posthuman is the space Mark C. Taylor attempts to chart in the volume's first conceptual essay. Along with the volume postscript by Cary Wolfe, Taylor's is one of two provocations on the general nature of the posthuman *Mechademia* solicited to place the other essays in a wider intellectual context. Taylor's map of the contours of the human is a Venn diagram, and his overlapping sets suggest that none of the dichotomies mentioned above is ever permanent or complete: the intersecting systems we now delineate as nature, culture, society, and technology are part of a network, and each is in turn composed of smaller networks, with products emerging and evolving through the spontaneous organization of connected elements. The changing, aleatory quality of these emerging phenomena and the fractal nature of this structure—in which there is no universal metanetwork, and each subnetwork subdivides infinitely into still smaller ones—combine to ensure that no division will ever be permanent or absolute. Information itself emerges only in the interval between too much and too little change.

So, following Taylor, the meaning of the texts in this volume should emerge less from the groupings imposed by the editors (or the metalanguage of this Introduction) than from the spontaneous interaction between the various pieces. With that caveat, we attempt to trace some of the larger relations linking the different essays.

The chapters that follow Taylor's in the first section all revolve around

the notion of the monstrous, a space that defines the contours of the human by lying on the other side of some perceived supernatural divide. Michael Dylan Foster's essay on manga artist Mizuki Shigeru traces the link between Mizuki's own life and his monstrous *yōkai* subjects like his classic character Gegege no Kitarō. Foster shows how Mizuki constructed an autobiographical mythology alongside his manga and anime fictions and his semifictionalized studies of *yōkai* folklore: in all three narratives, Mizuki seemed to hold out to his urban readers the promise of a vanished primitive past to which modern humans might return through the gate of *yōkai* culture.

Laura Miller also traces the meeting of the modern and the premodern with a chapter on Abe no Seimei. Starting in the 1990s, this tenth-century court magician was transformed into a pop-culture icon in Japan, the supernatural hero of manga and films, and the mascot for a wide array of consumer products. Extending her previous work on beauty culture and girl culture into the realm of the supernatural, Miller shows that Abe no Seimei's cultural metamorphosis was accompanied by a physical transformation from a portly Heian gentleman to a beautiful male hero. Miller relates this to the power young girls now have as cultural consumers, the power to remake distant historical figures in their own (desired) image.

Theresa Winge continues this theme with a chapter on Lolita fashion. The Gothic Lolita style that has attracted so much attention in the West links thematically to the theme of the monstrous (or at least the Gothic), but Winge describes a fuller range of Lolita subcultures and concludes, not unlike Miller, that this fashion represents a kind of empowerment for its adherents, who achieve agency by setting themselves outside conventional Japanese culture with dress perceived by others as monstrous or childish or both.

In the second section of the volume—"Companions"—we combine essays that treat animal and mechanical others and try to conceive relationships that are intimate but not anthropomorphized, complementary but distinct. Thomas LaMarre contributes the first part of a two-part theorization of "speciesism," which in his usage represents the displacement of race and racism onto relations between humans and nonhuman animals. Looking at prewar and wartime anime like the Norakuro series, LaMarre shows that in these films the world's different races are differentiated by often racist associations with different species; at the same time, the plasticity of animal depiction provides the opportunity for new blurrings and associations that move beyond naive humanism. The result is a remapping of racial and species difference that offers new risks as well as new opportunities.

There follow two essays by noted Japanese manga critics writing on

Tezuka Osamu's original cyborg hero, Atom. Yomota Inuhiko links the animal and mechanical nonhumans in Tezuka's work by comparing the boy robot Atom with the extraterrestrial and animal characters in *Lost World* and Tezuka's other series. If humanity in these works is always defined by its exclusion and domination of nonhuman others, Yomota argues that Tezuka's heroes often occupy a liminal state between human and nonhuman that allows them to perceive and critique this state, even if they can never overcome it. Ōtsuka Eiji considers Atom in the context of the American occupation and the renunciation of war in the postwar constitution that the United States forced on Japan. Ōtsuka sees Atom as liminal not only in his almost human status but because, in formal terms, he is part of a new style that mediates between the scientific realism of wartime manga that portrayed military technology and the property LaMarre notes: the Disney-esque American style of plastic bodies that were both indestructible and subject to endless violence.

Finally, the chapters by Lawrence Bird and Sharalyn Orbaugh continue to treat the interface between the human and the machine, but they also form a bridge to the next section of the volume, which traces the expanding network in which "human" is but one of many interconnected nodes. Combining architectural and film history, Bird looks at the relationship between humans and their urban environments in three versions of *Metropolis*: Fritz Lang's 1927 film, Tezuka Osamu's later manga, and the more recent anime written by Ōtomo Katsuhiro and directed by Rintarō. Bird reveals how the traces of power are mapped onto the three cities and their human and robotic inhabitants, and he sees in the crises and destruction of these cities a dissolution (alternately apocalyptic and revolutionary) of human bodies and boundaries.

While Bird looks to the architecture of the city to illuminate the relationship between human and robot characters, Orbaugh does the reverse for Oshii Mamoru's *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*. Urban power networks in Oshii's film are already all too clear, but Orbaugh discovers a concealed social/human network of affect—what she theorizes as a shared, sensed emotion that links the human, animal, and mechanical characters and viewers with one another. The blurry distinction between body and mind or soul implied by the film's title has been examined by any number of critics in the context of the first film, but Orbaugh makes it new by turning it inside out: instead of a human ghost trapped in a mechanical shell, she suggests that feeling (the characters' feeling and the feeling we have for them) is always already part of a field that floats around and between them and us.

The third section of the volume turns on compossibility, which might be further glossed as a kind of coexistence in which the human and inhuman

are spaces we inhabit with others, or even put on and take off. The classic example is the robot battle suit, but the principle extends to dolls, puppets, and plastic models as well.

Takayuki Tatsumi's essay on the *Gundam* series discusses the powered suit, its rosy promise of transparently magnifying and extending human power, and the resonance between that fantasy and Japan's political situation from the time of *Gundam*'s debut down to today. This balance or imbalance between the technical, the ethical, and the political is like the situation Ōtsuka traces for Atom; and in his characteristically encyclopedic style, Tatsumi shows how *Gundam*'s web of influence extends even further, back to Robert A. Heinlein and forward to contemporary Japanese art. The essay turns the monolithic individual robots of the series, images of human magnification and containment, into a complex web of interrelated figures and ideas.

Teri Silvio traces a congruent process in her anthropological study of character-toy collectors in Taiwan. Silvio compares the toys with religious icons: while icons are believed to embody or enclose the spirit or personality (the *ling*) of the god, the production and duplication of icons also permit the god to multiply and spread—a process Silvio compares with global consumer culture and the spread of character dolls and action figures. Silvio sees these processes and the link between them not as a fading of belief (in the human or the divine) but as part of a transition in the formation of the human from the realm of history, biology, and race to the realm of imagination. And for an alternative or dissenting approach that also takes religion and robots as its starting point, see the long interview with voice actor Crispin Freeman in the Torendo section. Instead of the nonhuman, Freeman focuses on the superhuman, which he explores through the notion of enduring religious and mythic archetypes. Freeman's search for stable conventions that illuminate human limits could be interpreted as a rejection of the posthuman perspective and an effort to assert the ongoing importance of a more traditional, humanistic one.

Steven T. Brown's reading of *Innocence* begins from the related notion of the doll, but it ranges widely enough to recapitulate themes from many of the previous essays. Brown examines the notion of the uncanny in this film, especially with respect to the dolls that are so important to the film's imagery and plot. Like Orbaugh, he views the film as inverting the geometry of human interiority: as the robot dolls are opened up and taken apart, their fleshly striptease promises to reveal their interiors, but they are all finally empty. Brown relates that image to Hans Bellmer's doll photography from the 1930s. In one reading, Bellmer's fetishistic photographs portray a degeneracy that

opposes the mythologized human form promoted by the Nazis, much in the same way Rintarō's *Metropolis* destroys the heroine's body and the surrounding city in order to resist the authoritarianism of Lang's original film. If there is a positive ideal in *Innocence,* Brown sees it in Batō's canine companion. But this is a "companion" in Donna Haraway's particular sense of the term: that which transforms both the human and the animal into something else. Even Taylor's ideas reappear here, in Brown's notion that the déjà vu–like repetitions in *Innocence* constitute a kind of aleatory metafictional machine that generates new meanings with each iteration.

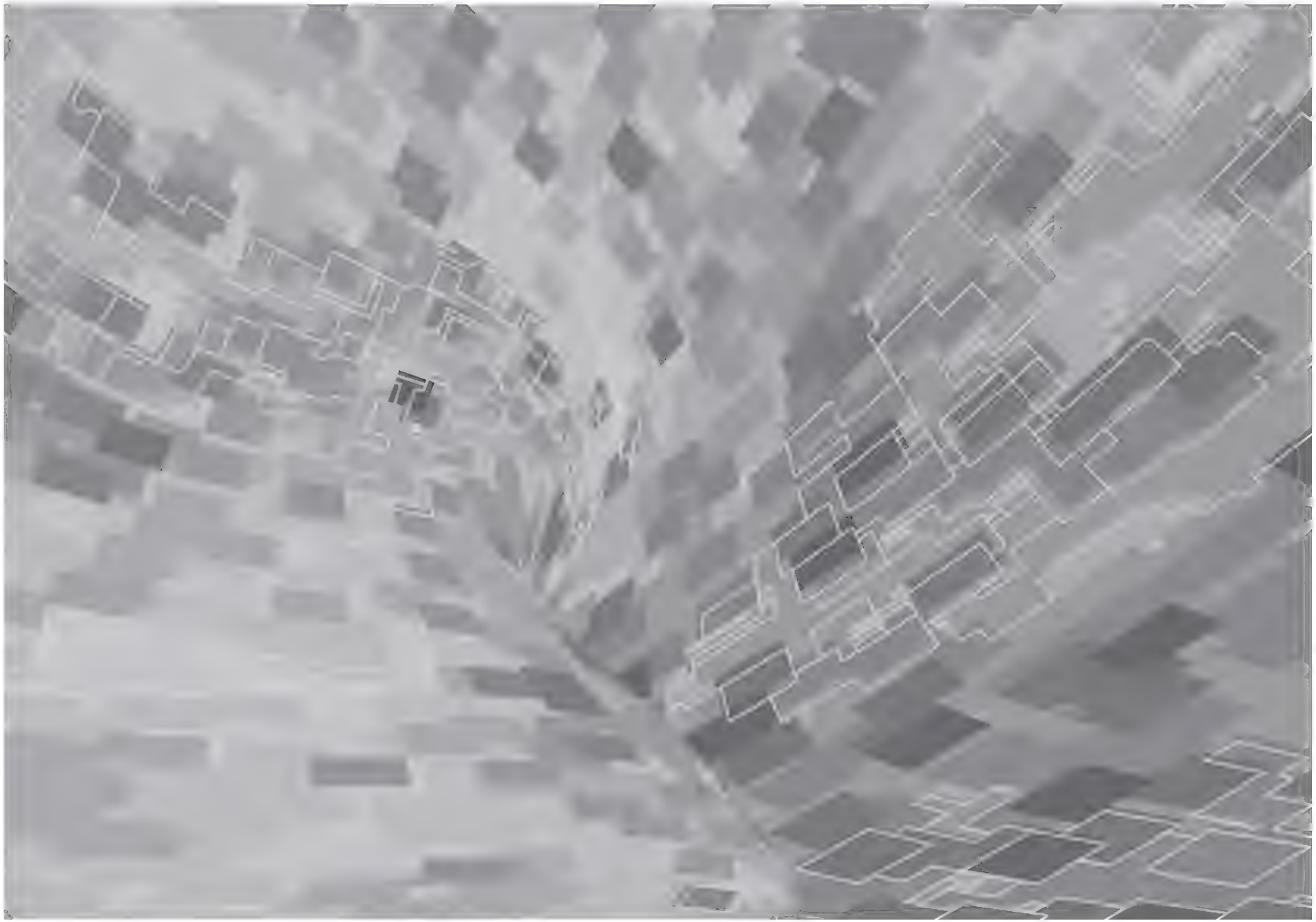
This last point is reiterated in Cary Wolfe's brief, suggestive statement that our changing understandings of life and information increasingly invade and challenge one another. Wolfe makes explicit the issue that all the essays have treated implicitly: once we've pushed the limits of the human out (or in, or back) on all these several fronts, the issue becomes not just the nature of the human but the nature of life itself.

As these rising stakes suggest, a volume introduction like this one must quickly reach its own limits. By the nature of the subject, there is only so far that a map like this can or should extend. So we now invite our readers to forge ahead and explore this new territory firsthand.

人間に

Contours

Around the Human



MARK C. TAYLOR

Refiguring the Human

We are always already posthuman. The human is never separate and closed in on itself but is always implicated in open systems and structures that expose it to dimensions of alterity that disrupt stability and displace identity. Recent developments in media and networking technologies as well as bioinformatics disclose the inadequacies of taxonomic schemata that have long been used to define the human by distinguishing it from that which appears to be other.

Self/World
Human/Nonhuman
Organism/Machine
Culture/Nature
Information/Noise
Negentropy/Entropy

Far from exclusive opposites, these binaries are coemergent and codependent: each presupposes the other and neither can be itself apart from the other. When fully elaborated and deployed, structures of codependence

form complex adaptive networks in which the reciprocal relations issue in co-evolutionary processes that perpetually figure, disfigure, and refigure every identity that seems to be secure (see Figure 1).

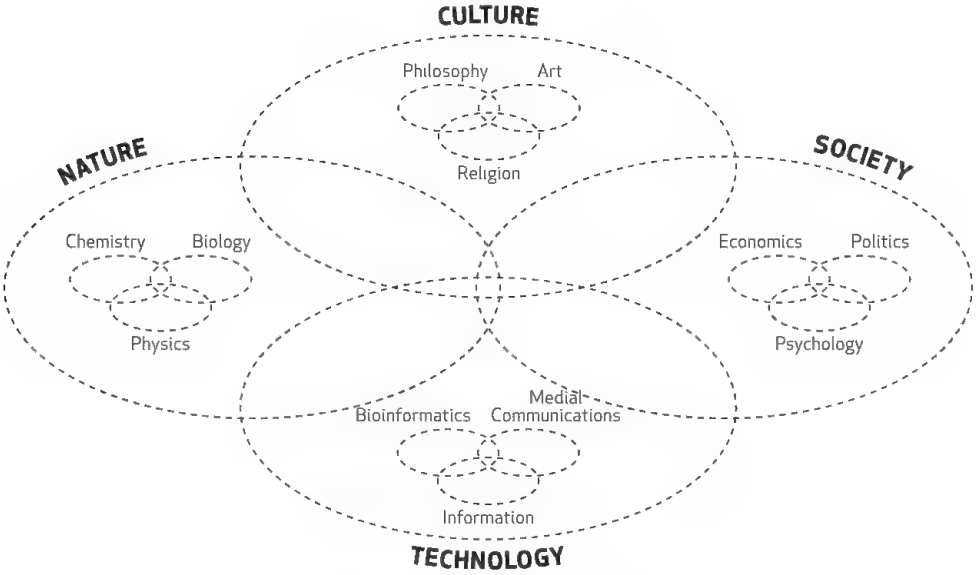


FIGURE 1. Codependence of nature, culture, society, and technology.

The interplay of nature, society, culture, and technology forms the shifty matrix within which reality as we know it is constituted.

All such relational webs have the following characteristics.

1. They are composed of many codependent parts connected in multiple and changing ways.
2. They display spontaneous self-organization, which occurs within parameters of constraint that leave space for the aleatory.
3. The structures resulting from spontaneous self-organization emerge from but are not necessarily reducible to the interactivity of the components in the system.
4. Self-organizing structures are open and, therefore, are able to adapt and coevolve with other structures.
5. As connectivity increases, networks become more complex and move toward a tipping where a discontinuous phase shift occurs.

It is important to stress three important points in this context. First, the structure of these networks is fractal; that is to say, they display the same structure at every level of organization. Since networks are always networks composed of other networks, there is no underlying or overarching meta-network. Second, networks are isomorphic across media. Natural, cultural, social, and technological networks have the same structure and operational logic. Third, and finally, networks are self-organizing—order emerges from within and is not imposed from without. Within the ever-changing web of relations, nothing is fixed or permanent. Patterns are transient, and survival depends on adaptivity to fitness landscapes that are themselves subject to coevolutionary pressures.

The currency of exchange in complex adaptive networks is information. In their 1949 groundbreaking book *The Mathematical Theory of Information,* Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver develop a notion of information that differs significantly from the common sense of the term. "The word *information,* in this theory," Weaver explains, "must not be confused with its ordinary usage. In particular, *information* must not be confused with meaning."[1] Meaning arises at a different level of organization. Information, in the strict sense of the term, is inversely proportional to probability: the more probable, the less information; the less probable, the more information. Gregory Bateson offers a concise definition of information when he claims: "information is a difference that makes a difference."[2] The domain of information lies *between* too little and too much difference. On the one hand, information *is* a difference and, therefore, in the absence of difference there is no information. On the other hand, information is a difference that *makes a difference.* Not all differences make a difference because some differences are indifferent and hence inconsequential. Both too little and too much difference creates noise. Always articulated between a condition of undifferentiation and indifferent differentiation, information emerges along the two-sided edge of chaos. The articulation of difference brings about the emergence of pattern from noise. Information and noise are not merely opposites but coemerge and, therefore, are codependent: *information is noise in formation.* Noise, by contrast, interrupts or interferes with informative patterns. When understood in this way, information stabilizes noise and noise destabilizes information. This process of destabilization is not, however, merely negative, because it provides the occasion for the emergence of new informative patterns.

Insofar as complex adaptive networks are isomorphic across media, information processes are not limited to either computer and media networks or mental and cultural activities but are distributed throughout all natural

and social systems. Biological and chemical as well political and economic processes are, for example, distributed information processes, which have the same structure and functionality as cognitive processes. The isomorphism of these processes is the condition of the possibility of their interoperability. Borders are not fixed, membranes are permeable, and lines that once seemed precise become fuzzy. As opposition gives way to relation, self and other fold into each other in such a way that social and natural worlds come to self-consciousness in and through human awareness, and human consciousness and self-consciousness are realized in and through natural and social processes. The play of differences that make a difference is the infinite process of emergent creativity in which everything arises and passes away.

Notes

1. Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949), 99.

2. Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972), 453.

MICHAEL DYLAN FOSTER

The Otherworlds of Mizuki Shigeru

Shape-shifting foxes, *tengu* mountain goblins, *kappa* water spirits, and a panoply of other fantastic beings have long haunted the Japanese cultural imaginary. In contemporary discourse, such creatures are generally labeled "yōkai," a word variously understood as monster, spirit, goblin, ghost, demon, phantom, specter, supernatural creature, lower-order deity, or more amorphously as any unexplainable experience or numinous occurrence.[1] Such weird and mysterious things emerge ambiguously at the intersection of the everyday and extraordinary, the real and the imaginary, questioning the borders of the human, and challenging the way we order the world around us. Despite its historical longevity, the notion of yōkai is neither monolithic nor transcendent; rather, as has been said of the "monster" in the West, the yōkai "is an embodiment of a certain cultural moment—of a time, a feeling, and a place."[2] That is to say, the meaning of yōkai is always changing—shape-shifting, as it were—to reflect the episteme of the particular time and place. By interrogating this meaning we uncover some of the hidden philosophies and unconscious ideologies of the given historical moment.

In the following pages, I focus on some of the yōkai images created by manga/anime artist Mizuki Shigeru (b. 1922), whose work has shaped the

meaning and function of yōkai within the popular imagination of late twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century Japan. Mizuki's anime and manga are familiar to nearly every Japanese who grew up watching television or reading manga since the late 1960s, and today he continues to make an impact on a whole new generation: in April 2007, a live-action movie based on his *Gegege no Kitarō* (Spooky Kitarō) series opened in theaters nationwide, the latest filmmaking venture in a list that also includes the 2005 blockbuster *The Great Yōkai War* (*Yōkai daisensō*) directed by Miike Takashi.

> THE YŌKAI "IS AN EMBODIMENT OF A CERTAIN CULTURAL MOMENT—OF A TIME, A FEELING, AND A PLACE."

Here I would like to treat not only Mizuki's anime and manga but also some of his writing in other genres. Mizuki researches and writes extensively on yōkai and has published numerous illustrated yōkai catalogs that recall the Edo-period bestiaries of two hundred years ago. He has also penned several personal memoirs, some recounting his experiences during the Pacific War and his role as a sort of accidental ethnographer of the people he came in contact with in the South Pacific. In all of these writings—memoirs, yōkai encyclopedias, and anime and manga like *Gegege no Kitarō*—we find similar strains of nostalgic longing for a purer, more authentic world. And as Mizuki's personal history becomes metonymic of the Japanese postwar experience, both he and the yōkai he describes and produces are implicated in the formation of Japan's identity as a nation.

YŌKAI DISCOURSES

In order to grasp Mizuki's place within the cultural imagination of postwar Japan, it is important to know something about his precursors in the discursive history of yōkai since the Edo period (ca. 1600–1868). One of these key figures is Toriyama Sekien (1712–1788), a yōkai cataloger whose work emblemizes Edo consciousness with regard to fantastic creatures. Between 1776 and 1784, Toriyama produced four sets of illustrated bestiaries that collectively document over two hundred different yōkai.[3] These texts represent the coalescence of two modes of expression that were particularly prominent during this period: the encyclopedic and the ludic. The encyclopedic entails processes of collecting, labeling, and cataloging that were influenced by neo-Confucian ideas and led to the publication of numerous natural history texts, pharmacopoeias, and encyclopedias. The ludic mode, on the other

hand, denotes a sensibility that values recreation and play, and was manifest in such practices as comic versification (*kyōka* and *senryū*) and the spooky tale-telling sessions known as *hyaku monogatari*. Sekien's yōkai catalogs creatively combined the encyclopedic and the ludic modes of expression: each page featured an illustration of a particular yōkai, often complete with description just like a natural history text; at the same time, however, the accompanying text and often the illustration itself contained lively word and image play. That is to say, Sekien may have been cataloging yōkai, but he and his readers were having fun in the process. In fact, it is likely that Sekien, while clearly knowledgeable about traditional yōkai beliefs, was not at all averse to inventing his own creatures to add to the panoply.[4]

FOR YANAGITA AND HIS FOLLOWERS, THE COLLECTING OF YŌKAI REPRESENTED A RECOGNITION OF THEIR VALUE AS CULTURAL COMMODITIES EVOCATIVE OF AN IDEALIZED PAST.

Sekien never explicitly questioned the ontological veracity of yōkai. During the Meiji period (1868–1912), however, the importation of Western scientific principles inspired *bunmei kaika* (civilization-and-enlightenment) ideologues to actively interrogate the supernatural and debunk phenomena like yōkai. In particular, philosopher and educator Inoue Enryō (1858–1919) created the discipline of *yōkaigaku* (yōkai-ology) with a specific objective: to rationally explain away supernatural beliefs so that Japan could become a modern nation-state. To this end, Enryō collected volumes of data on yōkai-related folk beliefs from around Japan and developed an analytical framework to categorize yōkai and systematically filter out "superstitions" from what he defined as "true mystery."

In the early twentieth century, Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962) appropriated yōkai for his own burgeoning discipline of folklore studies or native ethnology (*minzokugaku*). One of modern Japan's most influential thinkers, Yanagita did not debunk yōkai as superstitions but rather set out to collect and preserve them as disappearing relics of earlier belief systems. One result of this process was "Yōkai meii" (Yōkai glossary); published over several months between 1938 and 1939, this short text lists and describes yōkai from around Japan, with information culled from a variety of local gazetteers and folklore collections.[5] For Yanagita and his followers, the collecting of yōkai represented a recognition of their value as cultural commodities evocative of an idealized past. Classifying yōkai may have been a way to demarcate an "authentic" Japan, but it also converted them into lifeless historical relics, fossilized specimens from another time. In a sense, yōkai were shorn of their

living mystery, remaining only as weird premodern forms stored in the folkloric archives of the modern nation.

Although many other voices participated in the discourse of yōkai from the Edo period to the present, Sekien's catalogs, Enryō's *yōkaigaku,* and Yanagita's folkloristics are paradigmatic of shifting historical attitudes toward weird and mysterious phenomena. By the time Mizuki Shigeru arrives on the scene, yōkai are generally conceived of as nostalgic icons from a purer, more authentic, prewar—if not pre-Meiji—Japan. They are interesting artifacts, to be sure, but ultimately empty and irrelevant to urban and suburban life in modern Japan. Starting in the 1960s, Mizuki would almost single-handedly revitalize the image of yōkai in the popular imagination, breathing life into their weird forms so that they would once again playfully enchant children and adults alike, but at the same time retain their nostalgic association with an earlier Japan.

MIZUKI-SAN AND KITARŌ

In many ways the yōkai phenomenon comes full circle with Mizuki's yōkai catalogs and fictions: like Sekien, he exploits the popular media of his time while also carefully treading the line between ludic (commercial) endeavors and the encyclopedic mode. Of course, the Sekien-Mizuki comparison can only be taken so far, as the radically different historical contexts of the eighteenth and late twentieth centuries endow their yōkai with distinct functions and meanings. But one thing is clear: by their promulgation through a variety of media, Mizuki's images and narratives are very much a part of the popular imagination of Japanese children and adults today.[6]

One character who appears frequently in Mizuki's manga is a somewhat comical-looking, bespectacled man who represents the illustrator himself. By inserting this self-deprecating image of himself (often referred to as "Mizuki-san") into his own narratives, Mizuki infuses them with a light-hearted self-referentiality and also contributes to a biographical narrative that has come to be as much a part of his personal mystique as the yōkai world he illustrates. Adding to the autobiographical material in his manga and anime, Mizuki has also described himself in a popular series of memoirs detailing his childhood in a country village and his experiences as a soldier during World War II. Together, these texts have created a persona that is intimately linked with the nostalgic image of yōkai and Japan's rural past.

Born Mura Shigeru in 1922, Mizuki grew up in the rural village of Sakaim-

PORTRAYED AS A SMALL DISEMBODIED EYEBALL WITH ARMS AND LEGS AND VOICE, MEDAMA-OYAJI SERVES AS KITARŌ'S PROTECTIVE FAMILIAR AND CAN OFTEN BE FOUND SITTING ATOP HIS HEAD OR SHOULDER, PROFFERING ADVICE.

inato in Tottori prefecture. Although his own memoirs (and biographical blurbs on his books) often identify his place of birth as Sakaiminato, apparently he was actually born in Osaka, where his father was employed, returning to Sakaiminato with his mother one month after his birth.[7] This rewriting of his birthplace from a major urban center to a small rural community is a minor point to be sure, but it underscores Mizuki's self-inscription as a person with authentic roots in the yōkai-infested countryside. (In the mid-1990s, this association became inscribed in the landscape of Sakaiminato with the creation of "Mizuki Shigeru Road," a street festooned with over one hundred bronze statues modeled on Mizuki's yōkai.) During the war, Mizuki saw combat near Rabaul in Papua New Guinea, where he suffered the loss of his left arm. After returning to Japan, he studied at Musashino Art School and worked as an illustrator for *kami shibai* (picture-card shows) and *kashi hon* manga, cheaply produced manga that could be borrowed for a small price at shops throughout Japan.[8]

Mizuki first garnered critical acclaim and popular success with his 1965 manga "Terebi-kun" (Television boy), which received the Sixth Kōdansha Jidō Manga Award. The narrative tells of a boy, Terebi-kun, who can enter into a television set and participate in the world beyond the screen. Appropriately for a period of rapid economic growth, Terebi-kun's television incursions seem limited to commercials for new products—from ice cream to bicycles—which he is able to acquire before they appear on the market. He does not use his special skills for personal gain, however: he gives many of the objects he acquires to a classmate whose family is too poor even to own a television set. He then disappears for parts unknown, traveling with his portable "transistor" television and providing newly marketed products to needy children throughout Japan.[9]

Although "Terebi-kun" does not concern yōkai explicitly, it plays with the notion of another world that interacts with our everyday existence, while also highlighting the intensely commercial nature of the medium. The program captured the tenor of the times with regard to the mystifying new phenomenon of television, and Mizuki's own continued success was tied to the rapidly developing TV industry: in 1968, his manga *Gegege no Kitarō* was made into a black-and-white animated television series. Subsequent series, in color, ran 1971–72, 1985–88, and 1996–98, with numerous reruns, and a

new version starting in 2007. The *Gegege no Kitarō* narratives concern the adventures of a yōkai named Kitarō and his cohort of yōkai characters. The progeny of a ghost family, Kitarō looks like a normal boy but for a shock of hair covering his left eye. His name, written with the character for demon (*oni*), might be translated as "demon-boy," a not-so-subtle reminder of his monstrous origins. As if to compensate for the missing left eye, another character, Medama-oyaji (Papa eyeball), represents the remains of Kitarō's dead father. Portrayed as a small disembodied eyeball with arms and legs and voice, Medama-oyaji serves as Kitarō's protective familiar and can often be found sitting atop his head or shoulder, proffering advice[10] (see Figure 1).

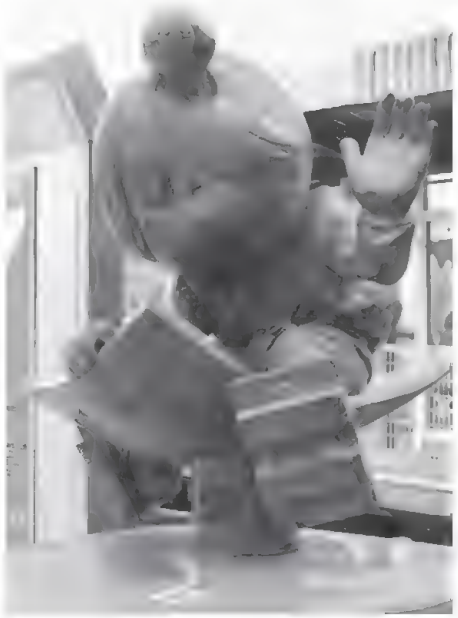


FIGURE 1. Bronze figure of Kitarō and Medama-oyaji atop a postbox in Sakaiminato. Photograph by author.

The self-referentiality of the *Gegege no Kitarō* character starts with the fact that Mizuki's nickname as a child was Gege, or Gegeru (his own childish mispronunciation of Shigeru).[11] Furthermore, it was Mizuki's left arm that was lost in the war, and one might posit that the mystical presence of that lost limb serves as an invisible guide in his work just as Medama-oyaji supervises Kitarō in his various pursuits. More to the point, Medama-oyaji's monocular vision provides Kitarō with critical insight into the otherworld of yōkai. One common theme in the *Gegege no Kitarō* series has Kitarō joining forces with his father and other familiar yōkai as a team of superheroes fighting for the survival of good yōkai and good humans against the forces of evil. In this way Kitarō serves as a corollary to Mizuki himself, struggling to protect yōkai and the (super)natural world from fading into irrelevance.

Kitarō, Medama-oyaji, and other characters, such as the devious Nezumi-otoko (Rat-man), are original creations of Mizuki. But many characters in the series are derived directly from earlier yōkai documented by the likes of Sekien and Yanagita. In particular, *Gegege no Kitarō* visually presents a number of the creatures listed in Yanagita's "Yōkai meii." In one short entry, for example, Yanagita explains that the "Sunakake-babaa" (literally "sand-throwing old woman") is "said to be found in various places in Nara Prefecture. [She] threatens people by sprinkling sand on them when [they] pass through such places



FIGURE 2. Bronze figurine of Nurikabe on Mizuki Shigeru Road in Sakaiminato. Photograph by author.

as the shadows of a lonely forest of a shrine. Although nobody has ever seen her, it is said that she is an old woman."[12] Mizuki renders visible this yōkai that "nobody has ever seen," removing her from the relative obscurity of Yanagita's academic writings to display her under the bright lights of popular culture.

Another regularly featured yōkai from the series, Nurikabe (Plastered wall), similarly exemplifies this creation of character. In Yanagita's glossary Nurikabe refers to a troubling phenomenon: while you are walking along a road at night, "suddenly a wall appears in front of you, and you cannot go anywhere."[13] Mizuki converts this phenomenon—the experience of mysteriously being prevented from making forward progress—into an embodied visual representation: a large rectangular block with eyes and legs (and personality). Where Yanagita simply states that a wall "appears," Mizuki illustrates the wall's appearance and an invisible local phenomenon is transformed into a nationally recognized character[14] (see Figure 2).

MEMORY, MONSTERS, MANGA

Gegege no Kitarō and other Mizuki manga are creative narratives. At the same time, however, Mizuki labels himself a "yōkai researcher" and has made a project of seeking out and illustrating yōkai from around Japan. As with Sekien's Edo-period codices, Mizuki's work often assumes an encyclopedic format: catalogs and dictionaries that come in a dazzling variety of sizes and shapes. Illustrated with the same creative levity as his manga, they stand as autonomous collections but also interact with and supplement his narratives. Indeed, many of his yōkai circulate in and out of different expressive forms, sometimes presented as individualized characters in his manga and anime, other times presented as "real" yōkai in his catalogs.

I should reiterate that not all of Mizuki's yōkai are derived from tradition; Kitarō and his father, for example, are wholly original creations, and accordingly they do not generally appear in his catalogs.[15] The ontological status of other creatures—such as Nurikabe and Sunakake-babaa—is more

ambiguous. Although they appear in his manga/anime narratives as distinct characters with individual personalities, they are also documented as "real" yōkai to be collected and displayed encyclopedically. In a catalog entry for Nurikabe, for example, Mizuki first duly references Yanagita, noting the specific location where the belief was collected in Chikuzen (present-day Fukuoka Prefecture), and then relates a personal experience with a Nurikabe-like encounter that occurred when he was away in the "dark jungles" of the south (*nanpō*) during the war.[16] As an admixture of previous reference and personal anecdote, there is nothing particularly definitive about Mizuki's entry, but its inclusion in a book entitled *Nihon yōkai taizen,* or the "Complete compendium of Japanese yōkai," lends it an unimpeachable sense of authority. Significant too is Mizuki's linking of a specific Japanese location in the past (Chikuzen) to a non-Japanese place (the dark jungles). That is to say, the Nurikabe signifies a local/past experience as well as a universal/present experience, both of which somehow fit under the rubric of *Japanese* yōkai.

CENTRAL TO MIZUKI'S ENTRY IS THE ILLUSTRATION, IN WHICH AN INVISIBLE PHENOMENON IS MADE INTO A VISIBLE CREATURE.

Central to Mizuki's entry is the illustration, in which an invisible phenomenon is made into a visible creature. In one of his many short essays on yōkai, Mizuki addresses this critical issue of rendering the invisible world visible, suggesting that yōkai and similar spirits "want to take shape (*katachi ni naritagatte iru*). That is to say, they want to show their appearance (*sugata*) to people." Even as he elaborates the mechanism by which this works, Mizuki infuses yōkai with agency:

> As something that tries to take form, they hint by knocking on the brain of the artist or the sculptor. (In other words, this is the thing we call inspiration.) We often hear, "yōkai and *kami* [deities] are created by humans," but the funny thing is that the instant you believe this, the *yōkai* or the *kami* will stop knocking on your brain.
>
> You have to believe that yōkai and *kami do exist*.
>
> It is just that they are rather elusive because their forms are difficult to discover, difficult to feel.[17]

Mizuki suggests that one must possess a certain sensitivity to the invisible world, a "yōkai sense," in order to endow these elusive creatures with form for all to see. Ultimately, it seems, yōkai are affective phenomena; illustrating their appearance is akin to articulating a particular emotion.

Along with Yanagita's descriptions, Mizuki's other major source is the work of Toriyama Sekien. Mizuki refashions many of Sekien's yōkai, reinserting them into a context more relevant to his readers. This is the case with one of Sekien's original creations, the Tenjōname, literally "Ceiling-licker." Sekien draws a tall bony creature, seemingly suspended in mid-air, licking a wooden ceiling with an extraordinarily long tongue. This strange creature appears in his *Hyakki tsurezure bukuro* of 1784. The title of the collection and the Tenjōname entry both reference Yoshida Kenkō's famous essay collection *Tsurezuregusa* (ca. 1331, *Essays in Idleness*). In entry number 55 of this text, Kenkō suggests that "a house should be built with the summer in mind. In winter it is possible to live anywhere, but a badly made house is unbearable when it gets hot . . . A room with a high ceiling is cold in winter and dark by lamplight."[18] Sekien's Tenjōname entry plays with this directive: "It is said that if the ceiling is high, (the room) will be dark and in winter it will be cold; but the reason for this does not lie with the design of the house. It is entirely through the machinations of this yōkai [*kai*] that you feel a chill in your dreams."[19] In other words, it is not the architecture that creates the darkness and chilliness but the haunting of the Tenjōname (see Figure 3).

The same yōkai is found in Mizuki's catalogs, with an illustration that is remarkably similar to Sekien's drawing. Mizuki's description of the creature, however, is different:

> There is a yōkai called "Tenjōname." You would think that it would be a great help for neatly licking clean the ceiling, which normally does not get cleaned—but this is not the case. It is fine that this "Ceiling-licker" licks the ceiling without being asked, but it actually causes dirty stains to adhere. When there is nobody around in an old house, temple, or shrine, it comes out and licks with its long tongue . . . It seems that if they found stains on the ceiling, people in the old days thought it was the handiwork of the Tenjōname.[20]

Not only is there no mention here of Sekien (or Yoshida Kenkō), but Mizuki transforms the Tenjōname into a traditional yōkai that "people in the old days" invoked to explain the stains on their ceilings. In addition to inserting the creature into the discourse of folk tradition, he also goes on to enshroud the Tenjōname in a veil of personal remembrance, with a concomitant note of nostalgia. "When I was a child," he explains, "there was an old woman in the neighborhood who was particularly knowledgeable about yōkai. On occasion, she used to stay at our place, and she looked at the stains on the ceiling

of our house and said, 'Look! The Tenjōname comes out at night and makes those stains.'"[21]

Through Mizuki's reinscription, the Tenjōname is transformed from a Sekien invention (a playful riff on Kenkō's canonical text), to a traditional yōkai lurking in the rural hinterlands and embedded within the corpus of lore possessed by old people before the war. By inserting his own childhood memory into an encyclopedic compendium of yōkai, Mizuki underscores his folkloric authority as somebody with an explicit personal connection to the traditions of the past. In this account, his own history is informed neither by scholarly familiarity with texts such as Sekien's and Yanagita's, nor by his years of activity within the urban world of the postwar mass media industry, but rather by a childhood spent in the rural village of Sakaiminato before the

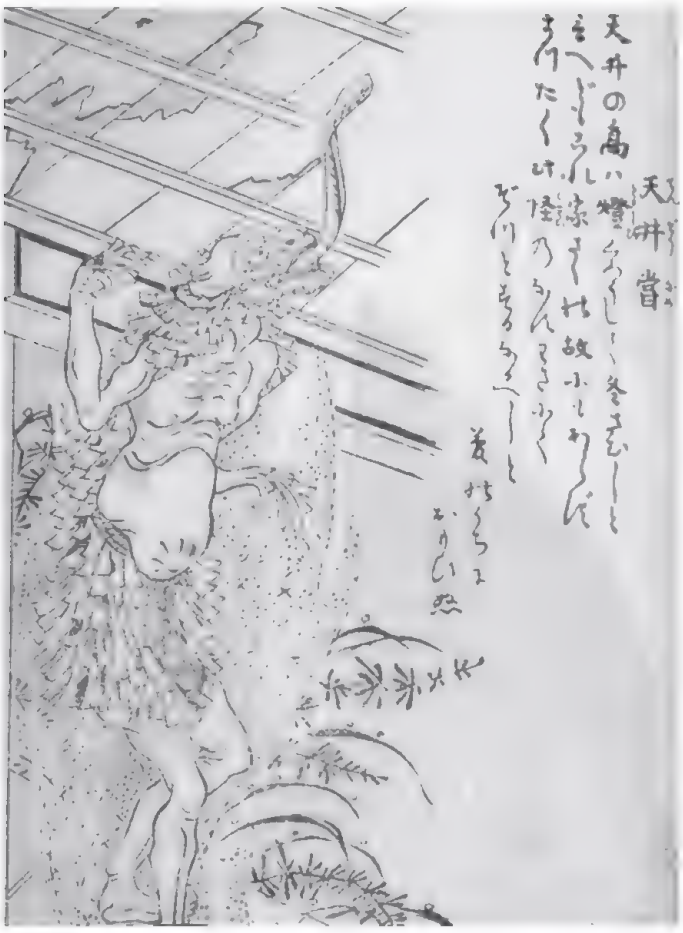


FIGURE 3. Toriyama Sekien's Tenjōname. Courtesy of the Kawasaki City Museum.

war. It was there and then, in an innocent, almost mystic atmosphere, that yōkai and the stories surrounding them inspired the imagination of old and young alike. Mizuki constructs his own hometown as an authentic and idyllic space representative of all hometowns; his manga, anime, catalogs, and personal memoirs bind postwar Japan to this desired prewar, prelapsarian, moment in much the same way Yanagita's writings linked early twentieth-century modernity with a mystical pre-Meiji imaginary.

In one of his autobiographical texts, Mizuki establishes this nostalgic world and his own position as a child within it. The old neighborhood woman mentioned in the Tenjōname entry, in fact, is one of the most memorable and lasting characters of his experience. She is called Nonnonbaa (Granny Nonnon); her name, along with her knowledge of the otherworld, becomes indelibly linked with Mizuki in the title of his prose memoir, *Nonnonbaa to ore* (Granny Nonnon and me) originally published in 1977.[22] The memoir relates anecdotes of his childhood in Sakaiminato, stressing his dubious performance as a student, his struggle to become a leader among the village children, and his relationship with Nonnonbaa, purveyor of local knowledge.

In the first section of the book, entitled "Childhood years living amongst the yōkai," Mizuki tells how he heard about the Tenjōname for the first time, and the language repeats and transforms the details from his catalog entry:

> Along with knowledge of annual events and ceremonies, Nonnonbaa also knew all sorts of *obake* and mysterious stories.
>
> She would look at the stains in the dim light of the kitchen ceiling, and say with a serious expression on her face that they were made by an *obake* called "Tenjōname" that would come in the night when everybody was quietly sleeping. I would look at the ceiling carefully and think, well yes, those stains seem to be from that. There was no room for doubt. (20–21)

By giving voice to Nonnonbaa as the bearer of tradition, Mizuki links himself to a premodern Japanese authority. "Nonnon," Mizuki explains, was a local expression for somebody who "attends to the spirits" (16). He writes: "I came to have a sense of belief that there was another world in addition to the human world. As an interpreter of this other world, Nonnonbaa was an absolutely indispensable person." As a medium between an older/other world and Mizuki's, Nonnonbaa translates sounds and signs into oral pictures that the young Mizuki can imagine and that he will eventually render visually for others to see.

Or so the autobiographical narrative would have us believe. Strictly

speaking, in fact, many of Mizuki's illustrations, such as the Tenjōname, are overtly derivative of Sekien's images, problematizing the extent of Nonnonbaa's influence on Mizuki's visual imagination.[23] (With regard to Sekien's image itself, Komatsu Kazuhiko points out that it is impossible to assess whether Sekien illustrated the Tenjōname out of local tradition or whether he actually fabricated it from scratch and it was *later* introduced into oral tradition through his texts.[24]) In a biography of the manga artist, Adachi Noriyuki reports that according to Mizuki's older brother, Nonnonbaa "was just a completely normal rural old woman. As for outstanding abilities, or special knowledge concerning spiritual matters, she had nothing at all of that sort."[25]

But by retelling the story of Sekien's monsters through the authenticating voice of Nonnonbaa, complete with explanations suited to a rural village, Mizuki reinscribes these yōkai into the life of the countryside. Just as Nonnonbaa becomes the symbolic medium through which he is made privy to the secret workings of the supernatural world of the past, Mizuki himself serves as medium between the lost world of a country town and the (often) suburban or urban worlds of his readership. My point here is not to challenge the "authenticity" of Mizuki's recollections but simply to note that by sharing his personal memories, whether fabricated or not, Mizuki contributes to the postwar construction of a communal memory of a premodern cultural ecology. Whereas a century earlier Inoue Enryō had worked to efface the topography of the supernatural with his analytical yōkai studies, Mizuki's manga and yōkai compendia redraw the map of this nostalgic landscape.



FIGURE 4. Bronze statues of Nonnonbaa and young Mizuki in front of the Mizuki Shigeru *Kinenkan* (museum) in Sakaiminato. Photograph by author.

The figure of Nonnonbaa acts as a guide through this terrain, teaching Mizuki to interpret signs, such as stains on the ceiling, as traces and trail of the invisible, otherworldly creatures that have passed before them. Nonnonbaa herself has already lived out her time: her stories have no resonance for "rational" adults. But to the prerational Mizuki, her teachings make perfect sense. The knowledge of the mystic skips the skeptical modern generation (and educated elite) of Enryō and Yanagita to be imparted directly to the innocent young Mizuki (see Figure 4). And Mizuki, as an adult, passes on this knowledge to the

reader, invariably presenting it in a sentimental haze as something already-no-longer available—and therefore, all the more desirable.

ACCIDENTAL ETHNOGRAPHER

The public persona Mizuki creates through his autobiographical writings complements the world of his manga and illustrated catalogs. His own life becomes paradigmatic of Japan's twentieth-century experience—or at least the experience of the "common" man in twentieth-century Japan. Raised in a country village, Mizuki was a reluctant conscripted soldier, who suffered—as did Japan—irreparable damage from the war. And yet, through his ordeals he discovers inner resources and otherworlds that fortify his future creativity. On his return home, Mizuki struggles through poverty like the war-ravaged nation itself, ultimately overcoming his handicap to succeed in a competitive market.

One of Mizuki's manga not related directly to yōkai is entitled *Komikku Shōwa shi* (Manga history of Shōwa). Commencing publication in 1988 as the Shōwa period was coming to a close, this eight-volume illustrated history includes accounts of political and military events as well as social and cultural movements. But Mizuki, who was born on the cusp of the Shōwa period, also intersperses scenes from his own life, renarrating his childhood in Sakaiminato and his relationship with Nonnonbaa. He illustrates, for example, the scene in which Nonnonbaa points out stains on the ceiling—although he does not draw the Tenjōname itself.[26] The history of the Shōwa period is also the history of Mizuki Shigeru: his personal memories of his hometown and wartime experiences become part of the collective memory of the nation. To some extent, Mizuki's popularity develops out of this self-narrativization—he himself represents the transcendent experiences of the nation, and therefore he has the authority and the insight to re-present them for popular consumption.[27]

The folklorist Yanagita Kunio often portrayed himself as a medium between the urban intellectual world of early twentieth-century Tokyo and the rural hinterlands. In his seminal *Tōno monogatari* (1910, Tales of Tōno), for example, he assumes the persona of ethnographer-hero, venturing into distant realms and returning to report his experiences. Mizuki can be viewed similarly: not only does he construct a persona for himself as interlocutor between Nonnonbaa/Sakaiminato and his readers, but his non-yōkai-related work also centers on this motif of alien or otherworldly experience. Unlike

Yanagita, however, his audience is not the elite intellectual of Tokyo but the everyman manga reader of postwar Japan, and Mizuki himself is an ethnographer-hero only by accident: an ordinary man who has stumbled upon extraordinary people and places. This is particularly evident in the way he characterizes his wartime experiences.

His memoir, *Musume ni kataru otōsan no senki* (1995, Papa's war diary told to his daughters), rhetorically positions the reader in the place of Mizuki's children; that is, Mizuki's personal account of the war becomes a public account, his individual memories retold for the sake of the family/nation. The memoir recounts Mizuki's career as a soldier and also describes in detail his encounter with some of the native people of Papua New Guinea. Recovering from the loss of his arm, and suffering repeated bouts of malaria, Mizuki notices some indigenous children passing by the field hospital. Realizing there must be a village nearby, he duly sets off to find it. His first impression of the natives' lifestyle evokes a utopian otherworldliness as well as a desire for an unspoiled Japanese past, harkening all the way back to Japan's Jōmon period (ca. 13,000–300 BCE): "The natives were like the Jōmon people, all of them living in a place with a nice vista. Looking out at the ocean in the distance and eating a banana, you couldn't tell if you were fighting a war or in heaven. That is how much Papa liked the atmosphere of the native village." He describes the village houses and observes flowers he has never seen before: "These gave me the sense all the more that I had come to an otherworld (*ikai*). With a feeling as if I had somehow come upon a fairyland or the Jōmon period, I moved toward where some natives were preparing food and getting ready to eat."[28]

Mizuki goes on to relate how he becomes friends with the villagers and spends more and more time with them. Echoing his veneration of Nonnonbaa, he finds another old woman at the spiritual heart of the community: "It would seem that all the doings of the village were directed by the old woman, Ikarian" (152). Mizuki feels at home in "Ikarian's village" and spends all his free time there, eating and relaxing with his new friends. At one point in a villager's home he comes across a Christian Bible; jokingly he reads several passages aloud, and the villagers begin to call him "Paulo." Mizuki himself never elaborates on this choice of names, but it is impossible to overlook the reference here to the New Testament apostle who changed his name from Saul to Paul upon his conversion. For Mizuki has undergone a spiritual rebirth, discovering in this

MIZUKI'S PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF THE WAR BECOMES A PUBLIC ACCOUNT, HIS INDIVIDUAL MEMORIES RETOLD FOR THE SAKE OF THE FAMILY/NATION.

small village the same innocent faith he had in Sakaiminato before the war. Indeed, immediately after this informal christening, he notices a strange odor emanating from the healing stump of his wounded arm: "it was the smell of a baby. The smell of something reborn anew. Somehow something like hope was springing forth" (153–54).

Notably absent from Mizuki's portrayal of his war experience are sympathetic Japanese characters; his fellow soldiers usually remain nameless, and his commanding officers tend to act in a mean-spirited and incomprehensible fashion: "I was bullied (your Papa had the lowest rank, so he was regularly beaten by the soldiers), and in every instance, they would say, it's the Emperor's command, so *die*." In contrast, the residents of Ikarian's utopian village are individually named and described, their "wonderful lifestyle" lionized in hyperbolic terms (174). The disparity between the two worlds is made all the more vivid when Mizuki is forbidden by his military superiors to visit the village and then suffers a life-threatening bout of malaria. Emaciated and unable to move, he is gazing absentmindedly outside when one of his native friends walks by. Mizuki signals to him and asks him to bring fruit. Later that evening, something cool brushes his hand; he opens his eyes, and just barely visible in the gathering darkness is the outline of a native child holding a dish of banana and pineapple. These visitations continue for several months until he gradually recovers (178–80). Not only does the episode vividly illustrate Mizuki's faith in the life-restoring powers of the natives and their utopian lifestyle, it also portrays the natives themselves as otherworldy inhabitants with special powers, appearing at twilight and visible only to Mizuki.[29]

Elsewhere Mizuki writes, "I found these mysterious natives to be rare and interesting . . . In later years I came to draw yōkai, but this was probably nothing but giving form to the agreeable atmosphere of these people."[30] The otherworldly realm, whether at home or abroad, is visible only to those willing (or naïve enough) to experience it. Just as he was the most receptive child to Nonnonbaa's teachings, so too Mizuki is the only soldier to care deeply for the invisible natives living around him. In both cases, Mizuki is an accidental ethnographer who ventures into these other realms and returns to tell about them. When the war is finally over and he is to be repatriated, it is with great sadness that he informs the villagers he must leave. They suggest he stay and he consults with one of his doctors, who replies, "There are one hundred thousand soldiers here, and you are the only one who wants to be discharged locally" (190). In the end, Mizuki decides to go back to Japan, but he promises to return.

And some thirty years later he does: the last section of his war memoir, entitled "Little Heaven," describes this journey back. Ikarian, the old matriarch, has long since passed away, but some of his other friends are still alive, and the reunion with "Paulo" is joyful. In the afterword, Mizuki explains how he returns many times, eating with the villagers and staying overnight in their houses. This afterword, and indeed much of the second half of the memoir, ignores the fighting and suffering Mizuki experienced as a soldier—and avoids completely the politics of Japan's Pacific War. It seems rather that what Mizuki wants to pass on to his daughters (and the rest of the nation) is the story of the discovery of a little heaven on earth, an otherworld where one can be saved, reborn, and nurtured.

It is fitting that in the thirty years between his war experiences and his joyful return to the village, Mizuki had created an entire encyclopedically inscribed otherworld of yōkai. "I can't say it in a very loud voice," he admits, but there is a correlation between the villagers and his yōkai: "Kitarō's world is similar to theirs."[31] In musing on the pristine "primitive way of life" (*genshi seikatsu*) of the natives in Rabaul, he wondered what had gone wrong with the modern way of life:

> Instead of enhancing the good aspects of the primitive way of life, humankind had advanced in a strange direction . . . The proof of this is that worries have increased at a ridiculous pace and we are so busy rushing around that we are left with nothing. I passed my days thinking about whether it would be possible to somehow improve upon this wonderful primitive way of life and discover a "modern primitive way of life" really worth living. (174–75)

Mizuki's re-creation of Sekien's and Yanagita's yōkai against the backdrop of his childhood in Sakaiminato is an attempt to do just this: to imbue modern life with a sense of the primitive and mystical. He is, as it were, attempting to breathe life and mystery back into the "nothing" of modern existence. Taking Yanagita's ethnographic work one step further, Mizuki does not simply map the yōkai topography of the past but directly channels this past—suitably enhanced—into his manga, anime, and illustrated compendia. His project aims to keep the past relevant for the present, to reintroduce and reanimate the museum pieces shelved and ordered by the folklorists before him, and to create a "modern primitive" world for children living in the expanding conurbations of the late twentieth century.

But while he succeeds in making yōkai a constant playful presence in the lives of Japanese children, ultimately Mizuki's reinvigorated creatures are akin

to the childhood memories of the nation itself. They derive, as Komatsu puts it, "from a profound regret, and are illustrated exactly as if they were memorial photographs."[32] Mizuki's pictures, and with them the predominant image of yōkai in postwar Japan, are memorials for a past now gone, a landscape permanently eradicated by the rapid economic growth of the postwar period.

MEDIA/MEDIUM

Mizuki Shigeru's career has been built through a profound agility in different commercial media, from *kami shibai,* manga, television, films, and books, to video games and interactive computer technologies.[33] Like his own Terebikun, he co-opts modern technology to enter other worlds and bring back rare and exciting gifts to an appreciative audience. To a certain extent Mizuki himself is a media construct: his public character morphs, yōkai-like, from the innocent adventurous child (Gegeru), to the bumbling sincere soldier (Paulo), to the irreverently wise old man (Mizuki-san) of his most recent memoirs. Mizuki's adeptness within contemporary media has endowed his yōkai with far greater range and influence than the monsters on which they are based. The yōkai he claims to have learned about from Nonnonbaa are no longer localized to Sakaiminato but have become metonyms for the weird and mysterious that once haunted all of Japan. They are the monsters of a national landscape.

In a sense, the trope of media is also appropriate for considering Mizuki's own role as ambassador within this landscape. As a human with special access to the supernatural, he acts as a medium, an intermediary, translating and negotiating different realms of experience. He stands between Sakaiminato and the world of his readers as a direct link with the ancestors of the modern Japanese, a liaison between the oral and the visual, the then and the now. And he seems to cherish this mediator role, noting facetiously that he is often thought of as a "yōkai-human."[34]

Indeed, as a medium, Mizuki channels other times and other places into the here and now. While yōkai always test the limits of the human, Mizuki's work also questions the limits and possibilities of human society. In a tiny war-torn village far away in Rabaul, Mizuki finds a model for life back home in Japan, a way to live that is both "modern" and "primitive." Similarly, his encyclopedically documented otherworld of yōkai represents an idealized Japanese past even as it suggests the potential for a utopian future. In early twenty-first-century Japan, the continued (and increasing) popularity

of Mizuki's work stems from a desire to escape the limits of modern society—the limits of the human construct itself—into otherworlds of utopian innocence like Sakaiminato or Ikarian's village, each a "little heaven" where everyday signs can be read as traces of not-so-everyday possibilities (Figure 5). Japan's current and ongoing "yōkai boom" reflects a longing for such an "other mysterious world,"[35] a fetishizing of an alternative space and the hope that there is something more than what we see before us. Mizuki's work suggests that such an alternative space is always close at hand, just on the other side of history, beneath the map, around the corner, through the television screen. These otherworlds of Mizuki Shigeru expand the limits of the present human world, enchanting it with mystery and, perhaps, infusing it with the hope of something better.



FIGURE 5. The layering of one world over the other is literally, if playfully, signified within the landscape of Mizuki's hometown: a sign on the platform of the Sakaiminato Japan Rail Station identifies it as "Kitarō Station" with "Sakaiminato Station" noted parenthetically beneath. Photograph by author.

Notes

This essay has benefited from the valuable suggestions of a great many people, but I would particularly like to thank Christopher Bolton for his constant encouragement and insightful editorial feedback.

1. Although *yōkai* is presently the word of choice, other terms are also invoked—such as *bakemono,* the more childish *obake,* and the more academic-sounding *kaii genshō.* Historically, the popularity of the word *yōkai* is relatively recent: although it has semantic roots in China and appears in Japan as early as mid-Edo, it did not develop into the default technical term until the Meiji-period writings of Inoue Enryō. See Komatsu Kazuhiko, "Yōkai: kaisetsu," in *Yōkai,* ed. Komatsu Kazuhiko (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2000), 435–36; also Kyōgoku Natsuhiko, "Yōkai to iu kotoba ni tsuite (sono 2)" (About the word 'yōkai'; second installment) *Kai* 12 (December 2001): 296–307.

2. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)," in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture,* ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 2.

3. *Gazu hyakkiyagyō,* 1776; *Konjaku gazu zoku hyakki,* 1779; *Konjaku hyakki shūi,* 1781; *Hyakki tsurezure bukuro,* 1784. All four texts are reproduced in Inada Atsunobu and Tanaka Naohi, ed., *Toriyama Sekien gazu hyakkiyagyō* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1999).

4. One breakdown of Sekien's work posits that most are derived from Japanese folklore or literature, fourteen come directly from Chinese sources, and some eighty-five may have been fabricated by Sekien. See Tada Katsumi, *Hyakki kaidoku* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1999), 20.

5. Originally published in the journal *Minkan denshō,* "Yōkai meii" is reprinted in *Teihon Yanagita Kunio shū* (Collected works of Yanagita Kunio) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1970), 4: 424–38.

6. As the godfather of the contemporary yōkai world, Mizuki has greatly influenced a number of other artists and writers, most notably bestselling mystery novelist (and 2003 Naoki Prize winner) Kyōgoku Natsuhiko (b. 1963).

7. Adachi Noriyuki, *Yōkai to aruku: Hyōden, Mizuki Shigeru* (Walking with yōkai: Critical biography, Mizuko Shigeru) (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 1994), 58.

8. For more on *kami-shibai* and the manga industry, see Fujishima Usaku, *Sengo manga no minzokugaku shi* (Folkloric history of postwar manga) (Tokyo: Kawai Shuppan, 1990), 2–18. *Kashi hon* manga existed before the war but flourished particularly in the 1950s, when *kashi-hon* shops were nicknamed "libraries for the common folk" (*shomin no toshokan*). See Fujishima, *Sengo manga,* 46–76.

9. See Mizuki Shigeru, *Gensō sekai e no tabi, yōkai wandârando 3* (Journey into the fantastic world, yōkai wonderland, vol. 3) (Tokyo: Chikuma Bunko, 1995), 11–42. "Terebikun" was originally published in *Bessatsu shōnen magajin,* 15 August 1965.

10. According to the manga episode in which Kitarō is born, Medama-oyaji is the sole remnant of Kitarō's father who melts away through disease. The eyeball remains to watch over Kitarō as he grows up. See Mizuki Shigeru, *Chūkō aizōban Gegege no Kitarō 1* (Chūkō treasury, *Gegege no Kitarō,* vol. 1) (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1994), 5–49; the episode, entitled "Kitarō no tanjō," was originally published in *Garo,* March 1966. With his monstrous but loving father, Kitarō might be contrasted with that other charming boy-hero of postatomic

manga/anime, Tezuka Osamu's Tetsuwan Atom, a high-tech robot created by a technocrat father. Both Kitarō and Atom are outsiders (the one a yōkai, the other a robot) in human society; they both represent a kind of nostalgia: Kitarō for a mysterious utopian past and Atom for a techno-haunted utopian future. For more on Atom's liminal or outsider status, see Anne Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 51–65, and the pieces by Yomota Inuhiko and Ōtsuka Eiji in this volume.

11. Mizuki Shigeru, *Nonnonbaa to ore* (Granny Nonnon and me) (Tokyo: Chikuma Bunko, 1997), 28.

12. Yanagita, "Yōkai meii," 428. Although Yanagita lists this *yōkai* as Sunakake baba (with a short final vowel), Mizuki presents it with a long final vowel, "babaa." Please note: throughout this article, all translations from Japanese are my own.

13. Ibid., 431.

14. Similarly, Kyōgoku Natsuhiko discusses the development of another Mizuki character, Konaki-jijii ("old man crying like a baby") from a local phenomenon into a "national 'character.'" See "Tsūzoku 'yōkai' gainen no seiritsu ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu" (Thoughts about the formation of the popular concept of yōkai) in *Nihon yōkaigaku taizen* (Compendium of Japanese yōkai studies), ed. Komatsu Kazuhiko (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2003), 547. By tracing Konaki-jiji back to its point of origin in Shikoku, researchers have charted the way in which "a word used on the family level" (551) to denote a particular old man who could imitate the crying of a baby is transformed, through Yanagita and eventually Mizuki, into a nationally known yōkai figure (547–52). See also Higashi Masao, *Yōkai densetsu kibun* (Yōkai legends and strange tales) (Tokyo: Gakken, 2005), 246–58.

15. Having said this, I should note that Kitarō has appeared in an encyclopedic format where Mizuki explains: "This is a made-up story, but having thought about it for many years, this yōkai took shape in my head. All the yōkai in this book actually might exist (well, you can't actually see them, but . . .) so I wanted to put [Kitarō] into this group" Mizuki Shigeru, *Yōkai gadan* (Yōkai pictures and tales) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994), 152.

16. Mizuki Shigeru, *Zusetsu Nihon yōkai taizen* (Illustrated compendium of Japanese yōkai) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1994), 337.

17. Mizuki Shigeru, "Me ni mienai mono o miru" (Seeing the unseeable), in *Yōkai tengoku* (Yōkai heaven) (Tokyo: Chikuma Bunko, 1996), 66.

18. Donald Keene, trans., *Essays in Idleness: The Tsurezuregusa of Kenkō* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 50–51.

19. Inada and Tanaka, *Toriyama Sekien gazu hyakki yagyō,* 273. Sekien's entry is typically packed with verbal and visual punning. Tada Katsumi suggests that the appearance of the Tenjōname itself is a play on Edo-period fire companies: the monster's clothing, mane, and fingers resemble a *matoi,* a frilly flag-like banner carried by firemen. See Tada Katsumi, "Etoki Gazu hyakkiyagyō no yōkai" (Unpacking the yōkai of Gazu hyakkiyagyō), *Kai* 12 (December 2001): 320–21.

20. Mizuki Shigeru, *Zoku yōkai jiten* (Yōkai dictionary continued) (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1984), 152–53.

21. Ibid., 152.

22. The memoir was originally published by Chikuma Shobō in 1977. All citations here are taken from a 1997 Kōdansha Komikkusu edition and noted parenthetically in the text.

23. Mizuki explains: "As a child, whenever I heard a yōkai story, I would draw an image in my head. In other words, having heard of it, the shape would take form; so when I first had a chance to look at Sekien's illustrations, I knew most of the yōkai without even looking at the names." Mizuki Shigeru, "Yōkai no 'katachi' konjaku" (The shape of yōkai, now and long ago), in Mizuki, *Yōkai tengoku,* 46.

24. The folklorist Iwai Hiromi (b. 1932) describes a Tenjōname similar to Mizuki's as an item of local folklore, but Komatsu notes that Iwai too may be influenced by Sekien's illustration, which Iwai includes with his description. Murakami Kenji suggests that the Tenjōname is an invention of Sekien's that plays off notions of ceilings and closets as boundaries between this world and the other. Komatsu Kazuhiko, *Yōkaigaku shinkō: Yōkai kara miru Nihonjin no kokoro* (New thoughts on yōkai-ology: The heart of the Japanese as seen through yōkai) (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1994), 63; Iwai Hiromi, *Kurashi no naka no yōkai* (Yōkai in our lives) (Tokyo: Bunka Shuppankyoku, 1986), 139-140; Murakami Kenji, *Yōkai jiten* (Yōkai dictionary) (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 2000), 235.

25. Adachi, *Yōkai to aruku,* 19.

26. Mizuki Shigeru, *Komikku Shōwa shi* (Manga history of Shōwa), vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kōdansha Komikkusu, 1994), 57–58.

27. The final volume of the series includes, appropriately, two parallel datelines: one for the Shōwa period and one for Mizuki's life. See Mizuki Shigeru, *Komikku Shōwa shi* (Manga history of Shōwa), vol. 8 (Tokyo: Kōdansha Komikkusu, 1994), 270–73.

28. Mizuki Shigeru, *Musume ni kataru otōsan no senki* (Papa's war diary told to his daughters) (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1995), 148–49. For subsequent citations, page numbers are given parenthetically in the text.

29. Mizuki's lionization of the local people is rare in Japanese war memoirs about Rabaul, most of which speak disparagingly of the natives and their lifestyle. See Iwamoto Hiromitsu, "Japanese and New Guinean Memories of Wartime Experiences at Rabaul" (paper delivered at the symposium Remembering the War in New Guinea, Australian National University, Canberra, 19–21 October 2000), http://ajrp.awm.gov.au/ajrp/remember.nsf/pages/NT00002B7E (accessed 21 June 2007).

30. Mizuki Shigeru, *Rabauru jūgun kōki: Topetoro to no gojū nen* (Rabaul military service postscript: Fifty years with Topetoro) (Tokyo: Chūōkōron Shinsha, 2002), 18.

31. Ibid., 150.

32. Komatsu, *Yōkaigaku shinkō,* 66.

33. Some eight years before "Gegege no Kitarō" was made into a television series, he published a manga in which he predicted presciently that Kitarō would be "dragged" into television and cinema. See the discussion of this episode in Kyōgoku Natsuhiko, Tada Katsumi, and Murakami Kenji, *Yōkai baka* (*Yōkai* crazy) (Tokyo: Shinchō OH! Bunko, 2001), 241–42.

34. Mizuki Shigeru, *Umareta toki kara "yōkai" datta* (Yōkai since birth) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2002), 147.

35. In Japanese, "*betsu no fushigi na sekai*" (Mizuki, *Umareta,* 150).

LAURA MILLER

Extreme Makeover for a Heian-Era Wizard

In 2000, observers of Japanese social life were amazed to see groups of schoolgirls massing at Shintō shrines dedicated to Abeno Seimei, a legendary sorcerer of the Heian era (794–1185 AD). Some noted that these visitors treated Seimei more like an idol than a *kami* (shrine deity). At a scholarly "culture seminar" on phantoms and the supernatural where Abeno Seimei was one of the topics for discussion, the venue could only hold sixty, but one hundred and twenty people came, many of them schoolgirls who tried to crowd into the room.[1] Girls' interest in visiting Seimei shrines and hearing lectures about him were only part of a trajectory of exploding fascination with this historic figure. Seimei, a genuine person who most likely lived between 921 and 1005 AD, became the focus of intense cultural energy and was the subject of numerous manga, films, a TV series, novels, anime, and books. The question of why a medieval wizard became a modern icon and folk hero is intrinsically interesting, yet is also a useful case to consider in our exploration of trends in contemporary Japanese popular culture. I believe that his new celebrity status reveals multiple threads that might be fruitful to consider. The example of Abeno Seimei idolatry gives us a unique perspective from which to consider the role of the culture industry in fueling and buttressing



FIGURE 1. Painting of Abeno Seimei from the Abeno Ōji Shrine Treasury in Osaka. Reproduced on the cover of Fujimaki, *Abeno Seimei*.

interest in the occult and the possibility of supernatural powers that extend the limits of the human.

For one thing, production and consumption of Seimei is an illustration of the power of the girl market. Japanese girls have been driving the consumer economy in numerous ways for more than a decade, forming a rich counterpart to male-inspired *otaku* culture. In medieval folktales, statues, and paintings, Seimei is presented as a grave middle-aged man exemplary of Heian-era masculinity. He has a chubby face, thin eyes, and a pale complexion (Figure 1).[2] But in the Heisei era (1989–), Seimei has been re-imagined as a *bishōnen*, a beautiful young man with huge eyes, flowing locks, and a sculpted face. One cultural change this indicates is the importance of what we might term the "girl gaze" in popular consumption. Because the aesthetic tastes and desires

SEIMEI CHALLENGES THE LIMITS OF THE HUMAN WITH HIS REPUTATION FOR HAVING EXTRAORDINARY MAGICAL ABILITIES THAT POINT TO NEW REALMS OF HUMAN ATTAINMENT.

of girls are encoded in Seimei imagery, the creators and consumers of Seimei products and representations do not have to actually be girls for the girl gaze to be present. Takahara Eiri's somewhat different concept of the "consciousness of the girl" is characterized by a valorization of the fantastic.[3] Yet both the girl gaze and girl consciousness point to the fact that a girl's point of view or thinking like a girl is not related to age or sex.

As an *onmyōji*, or court practitioner of occult science, Seimei was especially attractive to a female audience in which there had been a preexisting fascination with divination and the occult.[4] In addition, Seimei challenges the limits of the human with his reputation for having extraordinary magical abilities that point to new realms of human attainment. The combination of mass-culture themes—girls' desire for *bishōnen* images and interest in the extension of natural human endowment through the use of magic—led to what Malcolm Gladwell might call a "tipping point," in which a preponderance of factors ensure that a new trend takes off.[5]

WHO WAS ABENO SEIMEI?

We know about Seimei and his magical talents from venerable folktales such as the late Heian collection *Konjaku monogatari shū* (ca. 1000–1100 AD, *Tales of Times Now Past*) and the early Kamakura period *Uji shūi monogatari* (ca. 1190–1242, A collection of tales from Uji). In these compilations Seimei uses his remarkable ability for commanding goblins, channeling spirits, and predicting the future to rescue court nobles and to protect the capital. The story of Seimei's background goes something like this: his father is a court noble named Abeno Yasuna and his mother a famous beauty named Kuzunoha. One day Yasuna is traveling in the countryside when he comes upon a military officer hunting foxes to use in making medical potions. Yasuna feels sorry for a trapped white fox the officer carries and engages in a bout to free it. Later he encounters a beautiful woman named Kuzunoha, who is really the spirit of the white fox. Kuzunoha nurses the injured Yasuna and accompanies him home where they marry. In time she gives birth to their son Seimei, who seems to have inherited both brilliance and paranormal powers from his mother. One day Seimei catches a glimpse of his mother's foxtail, and now that her true identity is revealed, she decides to leave her life as a human and

return to the forest. As a parting gift to Seimei she confers on him the power to understand the language of animals.[6]

The historic Seimei was part of an established court bureaucracy that was in charge of ritual and magic that constituted a syncretic form of esoteric cosmology and divination called *Onmyōdō*. *Onmyōdō* evolved in the late seventh century from a mixture of Taoist, Buddhist, and incipient Shintō beliefs and rituals. Central to their wizard practice was the system of Chinese applied numerology, composed of three central institutions. These were the conceptual model of Yin Yang (the symmetrical opposition and balance of the forces of nature), the Five Elements System (a Taoist schema whereby wood, fire, water, earth, and metal metaphorically represent the dynamic processes of the natural world), and the *I Ching* (The Book of Changes, an omen text with predictions encoded in a set of eight trigrams and sixty-four hexagrams). The court magicians were responsible for analyzing strange events and anomalous phenomena, regulating divination, charting the auspicious calendar, exorcism, and protection from evil spirits. They also performed thanksgiving rites at royal tombs and forms of geomancy. Because the calendar was critical to assigning dates for imperial rituals, the status of almanac-devisers such as Seimei was much higher than that accorded court traders and clerks who computed profit and taxation. Seimei was thought to be especially brilliant in determining the sex of fetuses, finding lost or stolen articles, and predicting the best days for outside activity or movement, called *katatagae*.[7] He was credited with the ability to communicate with ghosts and goblins, and to use spirit helpers effectively. His achievements earned him immense respect and status in court society. It was believed that *onmyōji* had the power to channel or command spirits called *shikigami* (also called *shikijin*). *Shikigami* were used to serve the wizard as scouts and messengers, and would do his bidding and protect him. Through enchantment a great wizard such as Seimei could transform inanimate objects such as scrolls and paper dolls into spirit helpers or even use them as self-replica decoys to trick enemies.

SEMEI TODAY

Perhaps the person who has done the most to engender *onmyōji* fixation is science fiction writer Yumemakura Baku, who began publishing a novel series entitled *Onmyōji* in 1994. It is clear from subsequent interviews and essays that Yumemakura had "girl consciousness" and the girl market in mind when he began his Seimei output. He describes Seimei as young, great in stature,

pale in complexion, and overall a gorgeous man. In interviews he said that because folktales only feature Seimei as an old man and or a child, he wanted to imagine him as a vibrant young adult.[8] In his novels and later in the manga and film series on which Yumemakura collaborated, Seimei becomes friends with another handsome young man named Minamotono Hiromasa Ason. Hiromasa was also a real historic figure famous as a flute player who was passionate about music. A story about him in the *Konjaku monogatari shū* said that his "skill at the flute was amazing, the beauty of his flute-playing indescribable."[9] In Yumemakura's work they collaborate in solving supernatural mysteries and rescuing court members and the capital from a series of attacks from demons and evil ghosts.

As he was writing, Yumemakura came to see Seimei and Hiromasa as a pair similar to Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. Since those two were always convening in the Baker Street digs, Yumemakura selected Seimei's mansion as the place where the two Heian gentlemen could always be found sitting and drinking sake. Yumemakura confessed that, although historically Seimei and Hiromasa would have been married with children, he decided not to include this in his novels and manga.[10] Yumemakura later teamed up with the girls' comic artist Okano Reiko, daughter-in-law of the late Tezuka Osamu, to produce a thirteen-volume manga series also entitled *Onmyōji*.[11] It sold five million copies and won the Tezuka cultural grand prize in 2001. In volumes 1 to 9, Okano followed Yumemakura's novels closely, but after that she began to incorporate more esoteric imagery, including Egyptian and Greek fantasy scenes. In interviews, Okano claimed to have frequented "secret rituals and Shintō ceremonies" in order to obtain a proper "supernatural tone" for her illustrations.[12] Okano and Yumemakura remember the initiation of their collaboration differently: Yumemakura recalls that from the beginning he had handpicked Okano, a premier girl's manga artist, for the task, while Okano remembers that she herself contacted the publisher of Yumemakura's novels to express interest in illustrating them in manga form.[13]

After the incredible success of the *onmyōji* books and manga, Yumemakura consulted on the production of two feature films.[14] The actor selected to play the role of Abeno Seimei was Nomura Mansai, a handsome actor in *kyōgen* theater (comedy sketches performed as an interlude for Noh plays). Nomura created a fabulously sexy voice for Seimei's incantations and gave virtuoso performances that flirted with the theme of an erotic attraction between Seimei and Hiromasa. In the film's sequel Nomura cross-dresses as a graceful shrine maiden, or *miko*, who dances to Hiromasa's flute. This homoerotic subtext no doubt was feeding the desires of *yaoi*-hungry girl fans.[15]

Episodes in the movie are newly created or are loosely based on existing folktales. For example, the scene in the first film in the series in which Seimei uses a blade of grass to sever a butterfly is based on a tale describing how Seimei is challenged by Buddhist monks to kill a frog.[16]

The film was not the only media product to follow Yumemakura's novel and manga series, and from 2001 onward the Seimei and *onmyōji* boom proliferated in countless forms. There was also an *onmyōji* TV series, as well as a musical.[17] In all these representations Seimei is never the *oyaji*/old guy of medieval portraiture but rather the *bishōnen* of girl's manga. Tachibana Kaimu and Matsudono Rio created a manga series entitled *Bibō no mato* (The evil capital of the handsome) about Seimei and a fictional twin brother, Hōmei, who is trained in *bunraku*, traditional Japanese puppetry. Both are paranormally gifted hunks who face off with a series of supernatural beings (Figure 2). The series *Seimei Kitan* (A Semei oddity) is illustrated by *yaoi* manga artist Kanpe Akira and features Abeno Seimei and Ashiya Dōman as rivals for the role of supreme *onmyōji.*[18] In medieval folktales, the two soothsayers are contemporary rivals who compete in wizard battles. In one story the emperor presents them with a box and asks them to divine the contents. Dōman has bribed a servant to place fifteen tangerines inside and gives this as his answer, but Seimei turns them into rats and gives the correct answer.

In Kanpe's manga the story is changed somewhat, and Dōman must become the student of Seimei when he loses the contest. The contrast between Kanpe's image of two pretty-boy wizards and the Edo-period illustration of the same scene in Hokusai's 1814 collection of manga woodcuts and sketches is striking.[19] In Hokusai's illustrations, Seimei and Dōman are depicted as odd-looking middle-aged sorcerers with moustaches and soul patches. Dōman sports the currently detestable bushy "centipede" eyebrows. In Kanpe's manga Seimei has blonde hair, and both he and Dōman have large eyes, narrow



FIGURE 2. A beautified Seimei in the 2004 manga by Tachibana and Matsudono.

SCHOLARS OF THE SEIMEI FAD NOTICED THAT GIRLS WERE LEAVING NOT-VERY-RELIGIOUS MESSAGES ON THE EMA.

chins, and high cheekbones. Most other contemporary manga images of Seimei also depict him as an attractive young man in flowing robes. In Sanazaki's 2001 manga *Abeno Seimei,* Dōman is a sexy voluptuary while Seimei is a tortured soul who cares about others. Her series contains interesting scenes of wizard sex. In Takada's 2000 manga series *Hana emi no otome: Abeno Seimei koigatari* (The flower-blossom maiden: Abeno Seimei love stories), we are offered Seimei as a young boy involved in a hopeless love affair with a high-ranking court maiden.[20] Seimei's makeover as a young, male beauty recalls the trend beginning in the 1990s in which girls exerted pressure on living men to reproduce *bishōnen* aesthetics and style on their own bodies.[21] Now that power is arcing back in time to refashion historical men.

Aside from manga, Abeno Seimei and *onmyōji* began appearing in other media forms, such as the music video for the PlayStation2 video game series *Shin gōketsuji ichizoku* that features wizards, *miko,* and Buddhist monks dancing to techno music.[22] There have been a series of documentary films, such as Shiraishi's *Onmyōji juso kaeshi* (2002, The reciprocal curse), in which living victims of yin yang magic describe their difficulties. A number of *onmyōji* or yin yang music albums were also released. New Age musician Miyashita came out with the soothing *In'yō gogyō on* (2001, Yin yang five element music), and Brian Eno and Peter Schwalm released *Music for Onmyōji* (2002). A Japanese visual-*kei* heavy metal band (a genre of popular music in which outward appearance is part of the appeal) named Onmyōza began issuing CDs in 1999. Their song lyrics often refer to goblins, spirits, yin yang, and the world of the supernatural, and several of their albums have pentagrams adorning the covers.[23] Seimei and *onmyōji* proved to be a lucrative cultural industry, one that is wonderfully explored by Imagawa, who created lists of Seimei goods and media. He offers a selection of ten Seimei novels, ten Seimei manga, ten Seimei entertainment products, and ten Seimei nonfiction works.[24]

As the Seimei and *onmyōji* boom escalated, Shintō shrines associated with or dedicated to Seimei began manufacturing and selling amulets and charms targeting the girls who were visiting their precincts (Figure 3). One popular shrine good is a cell phone strap amulet (*omamori*) with a stone in the shape of *magatama,* a curved bead thought to have protective qualities. The stones come in different colors for better accessorizing. There are shrines devoted to Abeno Seimei in Kyoto, Nara, and Osaka. (Altogether at least thirty-three shrines throughout Japan have some type of connection to him.) Scholars of the Seimei fad noticed that girls were leaving not-very-religious messages on

the *ema*. (These are small wooden votive plaques. They are purchased onsite and, after a prayer or petition is written on them, are left hanging in a designated area for the deities to read.) One *ema* message read: "Okano Reiko-*sensei*, please give your best to the *Onmyōji* manga series!" Some *ema* were directed to Yumemakura instead.[25] Groups of five or more schoolgirls could be seen taking photos at the shrines. On a narrow alleyway adjacent to the Seimei Shrine in Kyoto is a shop that once sold neckties. When girls began walking up and down the street searching in frustration for more souvenirs from their visit to the shrine, the owner decided to change his business to the "Onmyōji Original Goods Shop." He sells Seimei postcards, posters, T-shirts, dolls, and occult objects. His hottest item is the Shikigami Facial Oil Blotting Paper (Figure 4).



FIGURE 3. Popular goods sold at the Seimei Shrine in Kyoto include cell phone straps, wooden votive plaques, amulets, paper charms, and purification wands. Photograph by the author.



FIGURE 4. Shikigami Facial Oil Blotting Paper sold at the Onmyōji Original Goods Shop in Kyoto. Photograph by the author.

MAKING SENSE OF SEIMEI

The Seimei boom illustrates the interwoven nature of the Japanese culture industry as well as the interplay between producer and consumer. A common business plan is to produce and release cultural products with a shared theme or character simultaneously in a spectrum of media. Often referred to as "media mix," it began when J-Pop songs were released as theme songs for new TV dramas or commercials. And unlike the usually separate film and comic markets in the United States, Japanese manga artists often work closely with film, TV, and music producers to insert their creations into other cultural domains. An important aspect of the Seimei boom is that there is no central narrative or story that is the object of interest and repetition. Culture producers rummage around in old folktales and histories of the Heian era for ideas about Seimei stories to tell, and patch together and create widely different versions of Seimei's life. The interest is not in the story but in the character of Seimei. Scholars of manga have also noted the deep interaction between artists and their fans and how this mutually influences both production and consumption. Unlike many culture producers in the United States, who represent their work as artistic endeavors not informed by market forces or audience desire, creators of Seimei like Yumemakura are very open about the fact that their projects are propelled by market reasoning. Most of the Seimei products point toward the interests and desires of an imagined girl-audience.

In his description of boy-oriented anime, Gill focuses on the theme of mecha-transformation, a type of nonbiological change that requires a device that is available to anyone. There are no special skills needed, thus making the possibility of transformation an egalitarian opportunity.[26] In contrast, the skills and power of the wizard are not available to everyone and are often of a biological nature. There are many types of transformations in the Seimei cultural wave, and it is not only Seimei who gets a makeover. In several medieval scroll paintings Seimei is depicted reading a magic ritual text while two obedient *shikigami* sit waiting behind him.[27] The *shikigami* in all these scrolls are horribly deformed humanoid creatures with bulging eyes and misshapen, discolored heads and stunted limbs. In contemporary works, however, the spirit helpers are refashioned as cute human-like creatures. In the *Onmyōji* film

AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE SEIMEI BOOM IS THAT THERE IS NO CENTRAL NARRATIVE OR STORY THAT IS THE OBJECT OF INTEREST AND REPETITION.

series, Seimei's *shikigami,* named Mitsumushi, is an adorable female court lady played by actress Imai Eriko. Mitsumushi is appealingly vacuous, sweet, and kindhearted. She is able to transform into butterfly form at will and is said to have been brought back from China by the Buddhist monk Kūkai. In the manga *Gōsuto basutâ Abeno Seimei* (Ghost buster Abeno Seimei), a cute young Seimei is accompanied by *shikigami* who are sometimes represented as precious little girls with ponytails and hair ribbons, huge slightly weird eyes, and pointed ears (Figure 5).[28]



FIGURE 5. Ghost Buster Seimei in the 2003 manga by Hayami and Koyanagi.

A minor thread that may have contributed to intense Seimei fascination is the Harry Potter novels and films, which were hugely successful in Japan. The first three of J. K. Rowling's novels were translated and released in 1999, 2000, and 2001, respectively, and by 2001 had become bestsellers.[29] Perhaps fans wondered about Japan's own wizard tradition after reading the books or seeing the films. There are, of course, other interpretations of the Abeno Seimei and *onmyōji* boom. It has been suggested that it is part of a new nationalism that is expressed in renewed interest in history and the great epochs of Japanese cultural innovation. Another theory is that Seimei's character resonates with today's youth, who see themselves as similarly involved in anxieties about political and social culture, and so avoid reality and immerse themselves in fantasies of the future. Finally, a journalist links Seimei and *onmyōji* fixation to fear generated from the September 11 attacks and the Japanese recession.[30]

During a thousand year period Abeno Seimei has been the subject of folktales, Kabuki plays, and other writing, yet he was never quite as popular as he became after 1999. To understand the new fascination with Abeno Seimei and his shaman culture, I find Grant McCracken's concept of "displaced meaning" especially useful.[31] This schema, in which cultural meaning is said to be removed from daily life and relocated in a safe, distant historical domain, allows me to make sense of *onmyōji* fixation as more than simple escapist daydreaming or fantasy literature. Living in an extremely pragmatic science-oriented society, consumers of *onmyōji* stories, goods, and images are able to locate the fantastic, the magical, and the improbable in another world that validates the occult as authentic, real, and natively Japanese. Heian-era Japan is not only the location of one of the golden ages of high cultural production revered by conservatives, but it is where we find ghosts, *shikigami,* and great soothsayers such as Seimei.

Many scholars have commented on the overt place of divination in contemporary society.[32] Divination services and practices are grouped under the term *uranai* and encompass Western and Chinese astrology, feng shui, Tarot, I Ching, blood typology, physiognomy, name divination, numerology, and other forms. H. Taneda describes the *uranai* situation today as being dominated by women as both providers and consumers of services.[33] This "feminization of fortune-telling" results in a preponderance of female interests being channeled into the fortune-telling businesses. The association of women with *uranai* is so strong that one book singles out the *uranai* maniac who is obsessed with drawing a good *omikuji* (sacred lottery) as a particular type of disturbed woman.[34]

LIVING IN AN EXTREMELY PRAGMATIC SCIENCE-ORIENTED SOCIETY, CONSUMERS OF *ONMYŌJI* STORIES, GOODS, AND IMAGES ARE ABLE TO LOCATE THE FANTASTIC, THE MAGICAL, AND THE IMPROBABLE IN ANOTHER WORLD THAT VALIDATES THE OCCULT AS AUTHENTIC, REAL, AND NATIVELY JAPANESE.

Although some occult pursuits have a long association with an older female cohort and with low or stigmatized social groups, the popularity of divination among young women escalated during the 1980s. While older women are interested in traditional forms such as the Chinese-style sixty-year-cycle astrology (*kigaku*) offered by street fortune-tellers or promoted by conservative author and TV personality Hosoki Kazuko, younger women consume multiple forms of novel or creolized divination. For example, many girls' magazines contain horoscopes that blend the Western zodiac with the Japanese ABO blood-typology system called *ketsuekigata*. There are new divination boutiques in trendy Harajuku, and teen magazines such as *Cawaii, Popteen,* and *Seventeen* regularly carry divination and astrology features. Divination fads for youth have included Gundam fortune-telling, in which anime Gundam characters are paired with blood types A, B, AB, and O to yield forty-eight personality types. Another craze was buttressed by manga artist Kubo Kiriko, who began illustrating a series of divination books that classified personality by animal types, a new zoomancy that differs from the Chinese zodiac.[35] (These last two fads probe the limits of the human on fronts beyond the occult, blurring the human–mechanical and human–animal boundaries that are the subject of other essays in this volume.)

The displacement of interest in magic and the occult to the historic Heian era confers a type of immunity. How can something so integral to one of Japan's most glorious cultural epochs get dismissed as nonsense? Girls' interest in divination can therefore be redeemed: no longer is it simply a frivolous game but instead is a behavior at the core of ancient and traditional imperial court culture.

Heian *onmyōji* and Seimei became ideal locations for contemporary girls to situate their interest in divination and occult. Magical practices and divination have existed in all historical periods, but by placing the new cultural products and ideas in an esteemed historic realm, they become associated with the pinnacle of Japanese cultural achievement, in other words "a historical period in which documentation and evidence exists in reassuring abundance."[36] Therefore, Seimei stories offer empirical documentation that actual magic once existed. The films, books, and drawings are often careful to present Heian-era clothing, screens, and curtains just so. When she set about

drawing the *onmyōji* manga, Okano read Heian history and diaries, visited museums, and attended festivals and performances in order to get ideas and to make her drawings appear authentic.[37] Yumemakura consulted a historian to make sure that all those scenes of Seimei and Hiromasa enjoying a cup of sake were correct. Did they even drink sake then, he asked?[38]

To have created such mass appeal, Seimei and *onmyōji* must have tapped into a raw arena of contested cultural tension. The contrast is between the forces of irrational, mystical preoccupation, openly endorsed in girls' culture, and the discourses of scientific reasoning promoted in productivity-oriented patriarchal culture. (Indeed, this male model is seen in Health Minister Yanagisawa's January 2007 reference to women as "birth-giving machines.")

I do not see the Seimei and *onmyōji* boom as fitting the epidemiological model Gladwell suggests. According to him, trends move like viruses: they are contagious and have huge consequences, because they spread and change quickly. As a psychologist he also sees trends as driven by exceptional individuals and only somewhat by a vague notion of "context." But although certain culture creators such as Yumemakua played a huge role in spreading the craze, their efforts alone are not be sufficient to explain it. In my view, the huge success of the Abeno Seimei phenomena results from the convergences that occurred in the cultural context, especially the different threads running through girls' culture. One theme is not sufficient to distill the whole phenomenon of interest in Seimei and *onmyōji*: the confluence of girls' fascination with *bishōnen* and things like divination is at the core of this contemporary cultural cult.

Within the appealing contradiction of an occult boom against the background of late capitalism, the Seimei fad also offers an intriguing case of the underanalyzed girl market. It is an ideal example of how culture producers are increasingly called on to recognize girls' preoccupations, desires, and aesthetics. In 2006, the Gundam anime series director Tomino Yoshiyuki was curtly dismissive of my idea that much of contemporary girls' manga is driven by their specific tastes, as seen, for instance, in the gorgeous eroticized versions of such classic male figures as Genji from *Genji monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*).[39] Tomino insisted that girls' interest in Genji stems only from their appreciation of a good romantic story. One hesitates to argue against the narrative power of Murasaki's classic novel, which most certainly had some role in the popularity of the numerous contemporary versions of Genji seen in manga, anime, theater, TV, film, and other media. In the Seimei situation, however, it is not an irresistible narrative that propelled him to beautified idol status. Rather, the traits associated with the character Seimei—his supernatural

powers, his mastery of divination arts, and his newly proclaimed beauty—are the primary reasons for his celebrity emergence. At the same time that he became an exemplary vehicle for validating girls' decades-long interest in the occult, Seimei is simultaneously pressed into the service of female subversion when he is so radically reinvented as an aesthetic object of erotic interest.

Notes

1. Yumemakura Baku, *Onmyōji dokuhon* (The *onmyōji* reader) (Tokyo: Bunshun Bunko, 2003), 224.

2. Aki Hirota (1997) describes a similar transformation process for male heroes depicted in the classic Heian-era *Genji monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*). She notes that Genji's plump face, thick eyebrows, tiny rosebud mouth, and thin eyes are never seen in Genji characters found in modern girls' comics. Instead, there are only *bishōnen* versions of Genji and his peers. Aki Hirota, "*The Tale of Genji*: From Heian Classic to Heisei Comic," *Journal of Popular Culture* 31, no. 2 (1997): 29–68.

3. Takahara Eiri, "The Consciousness of the Girl," in *Woman Critiqued: Translated Essays on Japanese Women's Writing*, ed. R. Copeland (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 186.

4. Laura Miller, "People Types: Personality Classification in Japanese Women's Magazines," *Journal of Popular Culture* 31, no. 2 (1997): 143–59.

5. Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2000).

6. For translations of some of these stories from *Uju shūi monogatari,* see Royall Tyler, ed. and trans. *Japanese Tales* (New York: Pantheon, 2002), 82–86. Stories about Seimei as a child (when his nickname was Dōji) and about his mother Kuzunoha are also common in the Buddhist narrative style called *sekkyō bushi* or "sermon-ballads." See Janet E. Goff, "Conjuring Kuzunoha from the World of Abe no Seimei," in *A Kabuki Reader: History and Performance,* ed. S. L. Leiter (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), 269–83. Kabuki and puppetry play scripts also feature the story of Kuzunoha. The story is also the subject of numerous paintings and prints, such as Tsukioka Yoshitoshi's (1839–1892) "The Fox Woman Kuzunoha Leaving Her Child" (1890). For more on the fox spirit or *kitsune* in Japanese culture, see Michael R. Bathgate, *The Fox's Craft in Japanese Religion and Folklore: Shapeshifters, Transformations, and Duplicities* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

7. Fujimaki Kazuho, *Abeno Seimei* (Tokyo: Gakken, 2000).

8. Yumemakura, *Onmyōji dokuhon,* 9.

9. Marian Ury, trans., *Tales of Times Now Past: Sixty-Two Tales from a Medieval Japanese Collection* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), 41–44.

10. Yumemakura *Onmyōji dokuhon,* 14–15.

11. Okano Reiko and Yumemakura Baku. *Onmyōji* (The ying yang master), 13 vols. (Tokyo: Hakusensha, 1999–2005).

12. Timothy Lehmann, *Manga: Masters of the Art* (New York: Collins Design, Harper Collins, 2005), 140.

13. Shimura Kunihiro, *Yumemakura Baku to Abeno Seimei* (Yumemakura Baku and Abeno Seimei) (Tokyo: Ōtō Shobo, 2001), 189; Lehmann, *Manga,* 147.

14. Takita Yōjirō, dir., *Onmyōji* (The yin yang master) (2001); Takita, *Onmyōji II* (2002); both translated as *Onmyōji Collection,* 2-DVD set (Geneon/Pioneer, 2004).

15. *Yaoi* is the term for a female genre that features romance and sex between male characters. For a description of *yaoi* fan culture see Matt Thorn, "Girls and Women Getting Out of Hand: The Pleasure and Politics of Japan's Amateur Comics Community," in *Fanning the Flames: Fandoms and Consumer Culture in Contemporary Japan,* ed. W. W. Kelly (New York: SUNY Press, 2004).

16. Tyler, *Japanese Stories,* 83.

17. The NHK TV Series *Onmyōji* aired in 2001. It starred SMAP boy-band member Inagaki Gorō as Abeno Seimei. The musical was performed by an all-female opera troupe similar to the Takarazuka named New OSK Nihon Kagekidan. They perform in Osaka at the Sekaikan (World Hall).

18. Tachibana Kaimu and Matsudono Rio, *Bibō no mato* (The evil capital of the handsome) (Tokyo: Shinshokan, 2004); Kanpe Akira, *Seimei kitan* (A Semei oddity) (Tokyo: Gakken, 2001).

19. Katsushika Hokusai, *Hokusai manga,* color woodcuts and sketches, 1814. Image reproduced in Fujimaki, *Abeno Seimei,* 119.

20. Sanazaki Harumo, *Abeno Seimei* (Tokyo: Bunkasha Comics, 2001); Takada Tami, *Hana emi no otome: Abeno Seimei koigatari* (The flower-blossom maiden: Abeno Seimei love stories) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2002). These and the other manga products mentioned here are only the tip of the iceberg. Seimei also appears in numerous other manga and anime, including his convoluted modern and past incarnations in the successful *Abenobashi mahō shōtengai* manga and anime series from Gainax. Gainax and various artists, *Abenobashi mahō shōtengai,* manga series (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2002), translated as *Magical Shopping Arcade Abenobashi,* 2 vols. (Los Angeles: Tokyopop, 2004); Yamaga Hiroyuki, dir. *Abenobashi mahō shōtengai* (2002) 5 DVDs (King Rekōdo, 2002); translated as *Magical Shopping Arcade Abenobashi* (ADV Films, 2005).

21. Laura Miller, *Beauty Up: Exploring Contemporary Japanese Body Aesthetics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006).

22. The video features Yabeno Hikomaro and Kotohime, with the Bōzu dancers.

23. Seimei was associated with the mystical symbol of the equidistant five-pointed star referred to as the pentagram or *gobōsei.* Known in Japan as the "Seal of Abeno Seimei," it often adorns interior design in Seimei shrines as well as exterior shrine lanterns and roof tiles. Because of its magical power it is also used on amulets and other shrine goods to confer protection. The pentagram is common in borrowed Chinese Taoist writings on the interaction of the five elements. In one formation, the five elements are part of the dynamic equilibrium called the Cycle of Mutual Control. In this scheme Fire wins Metal, Earth wins Water, Metal wins Wood, and Water wins Fire. Girls' consumption of occult goods, including the tarot deck, have made them aware of the status of the pentagram. Consumers are able to recover and tap into the mysterious world of the *onmyōji* through consumption of these products. One notable form recovery takes is through the symbol of the pentagram. It gives substance and immediate connection to Seimei's world. The symbol is a sort of proof of the concreteness of magic.

24. Shiraishi Kōji, dir. *Onmyōji juso kaeshi* (The reciprocal curse), DVD (Broadway, 2002); Miyashita Fumio, *In'yō gogyō on* (Ying yang five elements music) CD (Biwa Studio, 2001); Brian Eno and Peter Schwalm, *Music for Onmyōji,* CD (JVC Victor, 2002); Imagawa Miku, "Seimei ōru gaido" (The total Seimei guide), in *Rekishi gunzō shiriizu* 65 (The history collective series 65), ed. Gakken Kenkyūsha (Tokyo: Gakken, 2001), 90–97. Aesthetic salons also got involved in the fad and began offering yin yang five elements beauty treatments. For a description see Miller, *Beauty Up.*

25. Yumemakura Baku, ed., *Shichinin no Abeno Seimei* (Abeno Seimei from seven writers) (Tokyo: Bunshun Bunko, 2001), 86; Shimamura, *Yumemakura Baku to Abeno Seimei,* 33.

26. Tom Gill, "Transformational Magic: Some Japanese Super-heroes and Monsters," in *The Worlds of Japanese Popular Culture: Gender, Shifting Boundaries, and Global Cultures,* ed. D. Martinez (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 33–55.

27. Three similar scrolls illustrating Abeno Seimei communicating with goblins while *shikigami* wait behind him are found in the Abeno Ōji Shrine Treasury in Osaka, the Tokyo National Museum, and at the Seimei Shrine in Kyoto.

28. Hayami Yoku and Koyanagi Junji, *Gōsuto basutâ Abeno Seimei* (Ghost buster Abeno Seimei) (Tokyo: Gakken, 2003).

29. *2003 Japan Almanac* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun, 2002), 240.

30. "Soothsayers Rise from Dead after Terrorist Attacks," *Mainichi Daily News,* 22 November 2001, http://mdn.mainichi-msn.co.jp/waiwai/archive/news/2001/11/20011122p2g00m0dm998000c.html (accessed 8 March 2007).

31. Grant McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities,* reprint edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

32. Suzuki Kentarō, "Divination in Contemporary Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 22, no. 3-4 (1995): 249-66.

33. H. Taneda, "Fortune-Telling and Women—Contemporary Characteristics of Fortune-Telling in Japanese society," *Journal of UOEH* 22, no. 4 (2000): 351–62.

34. Ōtawa Fumie, *Choi yaba onna ni tsukeru kusuri* (Medicine to cure occasionally gross women) (Tokyo: PHP Kenkyūsha, 2006), 148–53.

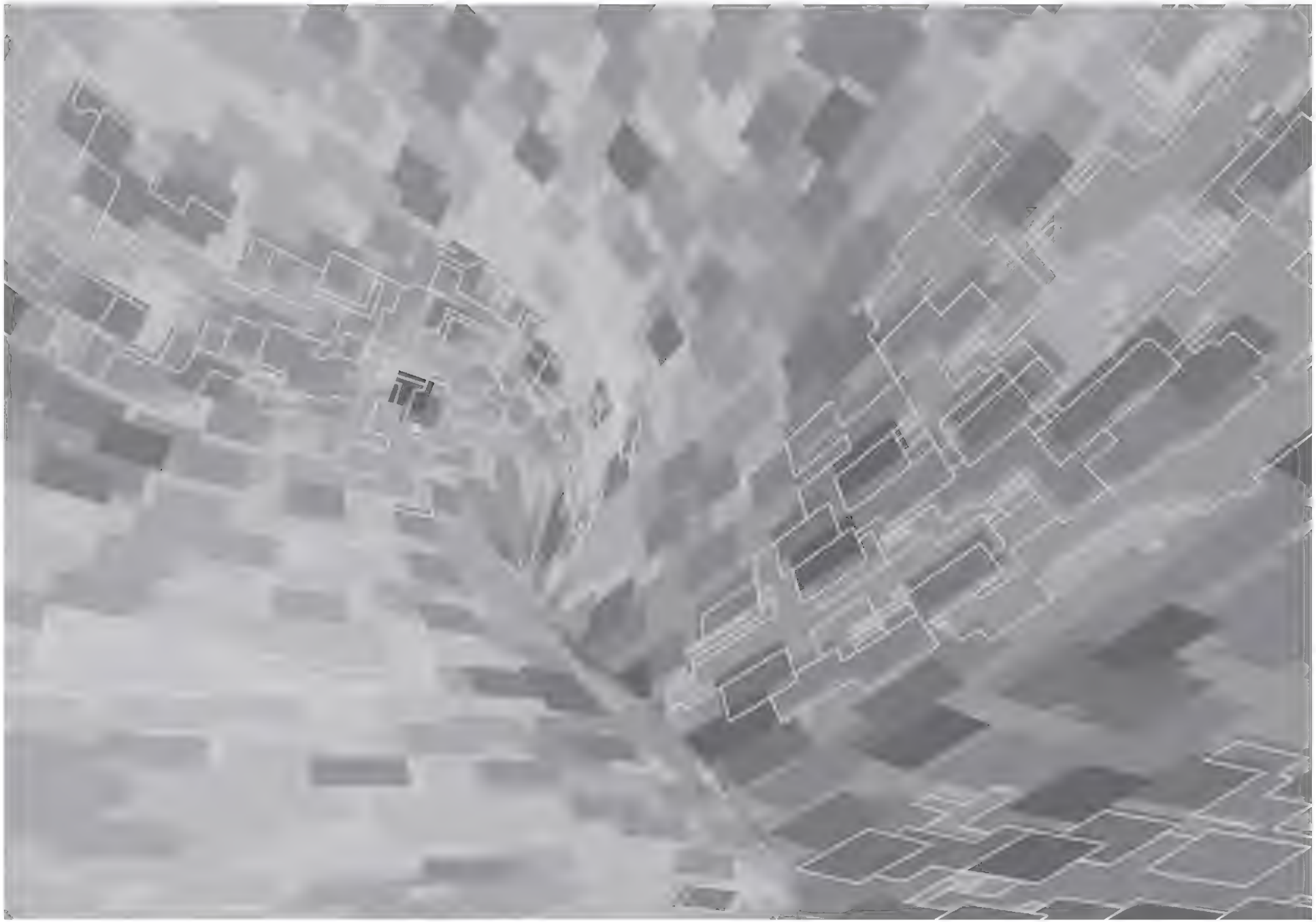
35. See, for example, Kubo Kiriko's *Dōbutsu uranai: Onnanoko hen* (Animal divination: Compilation for women) (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 2001). For a fuller description of *kigaku* and other divination types popular among young women, see Miller, "People Types."

36. McCracken, *Culture and Consumption,* 106. For an example of divination in another period, see Michael Foster's description of the ouija board type of divination game named *kokkuri,* which reached mass popularity during the Meiji period: Michael Dylan Foster, "Strange Games and Enchanted Science: The Mystery of Kokkuri," *Journal of Asian Studies* 65, no. 2 (2006): 251–75.

37. Lehmann, *Manga,* 140–51.

38. Yumemakura *Onmyōji dokuhon,* 204–5.

39. *The Tale of Genji* was written by Murasaki Shikubu, who is thought to have lived between 973 and 1030. Tomino's remarks to me were part of a panel discussion sponsored by the Japan America Society of Chicago and the Chicago International Film Festival, at Columbia College on October 6, 2006.



THERESA WINGE

Undressing and Dressing Loli: A Search for the Identity of the Japanese Lolita

Every Sunday in Tokyo's Harajuku neighborhood, the Sangūbashi pedestrian bridge becomes a stage for style *sukos,* or tribes, to gather, share, and present revolutions and evolutions in music, technology, fashion, and other areas of pop culture. A busy pedestrian crossing during the work week, on weekends the bridge is transformed into a space for Japanese youth to express and establish subcultural identities, primarily through the visual display of dress. One of the groups that has gained increasing attention over the last two or three decades is the Lolita subculture, which today plays an integral role in Japanese subcultural fashion.[1]

Lolitas, also known as "Lolis," are young women and men who dress as anachronistic visual representations of Victorian-era dolls, covered from head to toe in lace, ruffles, and bows. In the West, the term "Lolita" is often associated with the title character in Vladimir Nabokov's 1955 novel,[2] an adolescent girl who has a sexual relationship with her middle-aged stepfather; and in Japanese, "Lolita complex" refers generally to older men who are attracted to young girls. But in the 1980s in Japan, the term "Lolita" (*Roriita*) gained new associations within fashion subcultures. Japanese Lolitas are usually young women (not girls), who dress in cute, childlike, and modest fashions without

the overly sexualized appearance typically associated with Nabokov's Lolita. Or so it would appear at first glance, but perhaps this is but another form of sexual display.

The Lolita aesthetic emphasizes features of Victorian-era girls' dress, such as lace, ruffles, high necklines, and voluminous skirts, similar to the clothing worn by the heroine of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.[3] These are combined in turn with aspects of Japanese culture, such as Hello Kitty, manga, and anime. The Lolita subculture occupies a complex place within both Japanese culture and international popular culture. Within Japanese culture, Lolitas occupy a subcultural space where young women and men are empowered by the Lolita aesthetic to present themselves anachronistically in order to escape the trappings of adult life and with it the culture's dominant ideologies. But while they exist on the margins of Japanese culture, Lolitas also have had an impact on global popular culture: their traces are surfacing at global cosplay events, in American music videos, and even on the streets of New York City.[4] This exposure has led to much scrutiny of the name and the style, as well as some unintended associations and appropriations, such Gwen Stefani's Harajuku girls.

THE LOLITA SUBCULTURE OCCUPIES A COMPLEX PLACE WITHIN BOTH JAPANESE CULTURE AND INTERNATIONAL POPULAR CULTURE.

The Japanese Lolita communicates nonverbally through a highly complex visual appearance that requires close examination to understand. This paper focuses on the Lolita aesthetic as something that has created a space for the expression of a unique Japanese subcultural identity. I begin with an introduction to the Lolita subculture and its place within the context of a global popular culture. I then "undress" the Lolita by presenting three examples of Lolita genres and related aesthetics. I conclude by "dressing" Lolita with discussions about the aesthetic as a ritualized performance, a *kawaii* phenomenon, and a transnational object (global commodity), in order to understand the impact and importance of the Lolita identity.

LOLITA SUBCULTURE

The Lolita subculture emerged from the fertile ground of the *kawaii* or cute craze that began in the 1970s. This started when Japanese youth adopted a *kawaii* handwriting style, which included not only horizontal writing with loopy letters but also hand-drawn flourishes, such as faces, hearts, and stars,

inserted into the text.[5] By the 1980s, Japanese mainstream culture became obsessed with all things *kawaii,*[6] and cuteness has become a significant part of the Lolita subculture, as seen in the use of stuffed animals as accessories and childlike silhouettes.

The 1980s also ushered in the *vijuaru kei* (visual-*kei,* or visual style) rock bands, such as Buck-Tick, who wore elaborate make-up and costumes that explored the Lolita look. In the 1990s, visual-*kei* bands like X Japan and Malice Mizer gained popularity in Japan and helped bring attention to the Lolita subculture. Not only have these bands dressed as Lolita characters onstage but one member, Mana, also dresses as a Lolita for magazine photographs and has popularized the aesthetic. Early in the new millennium, the Lolita aesthetic was introduced to a global audience within the pages of the Japanese periodical *Gothic and Lolita Bible* and in Western rock music videos, such as the *Rich Girl* video by Gwen Stefani, featuring the Harajuku girls.

Lolitas are seen not only in the streets of Harajuku or Akihabara and in music videos but also within manga, anime, and films, and there is a related sexual fixation or fetish as well. *Paradise Kiss* (2000–2004, manga; 2005, anime; *Paradaisu kisu*) and *Chobits* (2001–2002, manga; 2002, anime; *Chobittsu*), for example, are manga and anime series that feature Lolita characters. Some of the earliest anime references to the Lolita character are the Wonder Kids' *Lolita anime I: Yuki no kurenai keshō* (1984) and *Shōjo bara kei* (1984). In anime and manga, Lolitas have been presented in ways that both support (e.g., *Le Portrait de Petit Cossette* [2004, manga and anime; *Kozetto no shōzō*] and *Rozen Maiden* [2002–2007, manga; 2004–2006, anime; *Rōzen Meiden*]) and undermine (e.g., *He Is My Master* [2002–present, manga; 2005, anime; *Kore ga watashi no goshujin-sama*]) the principles of the Lolita aesthetic as advanced by members of the Lolita subculture themselves. For example, the character Sakurada Miwako, from *Paradise Kiss,* could rightly be classified as a Sweet Lolita. The characters Sawatari Izumi and Sawatari Mitsuki, from *He Is My Master,* are difficult to classify as Lolitas, but they are often referred to as such because these siblings are frequently dressed as maids. The Sawatari sisters' dress, actions, and demeanor conflict with the Lolita aesthetic established within the subculture. Still, it is interesting to note that the anime and manga portraying Lolitas in unfavorable ways have still not received the kind of criticism directed at Gwen Stefani and the Harajuku girls. This could be because the Lolita may have originated, at least as a character type, within shōjo manga.

Additional examples of Lolitas in popular culture include the movie *Kamikaze Girls* (2004, *Shimotsuma monogatari*) and several other Gwen Stefani music videos that feature the Harajuku girls. It should be noted that when

A LOLITA'S DRESS MODESTLY CONCEALS HER MATURE BODY BENEATH ORNATELY ELABORATE GARMENTS ADORNED WITH LACE, RIBBONS, RUFFLES, AND BOWS.

the Lolita aesthetic is coopted for global consumption, it rarely reflects the representations seen in the streets of Japan. Stefani's Harajuku girls, for example, have presented the Lolita aesthetic with some specific modifications. Stefani's music videos and stage performances portray this aesthetic as overtly sexualized—with form-fitting and body-revealing fashions—and they also remove it from the context of subculturally approved gathering spaces to present it within constructed Western contexts like music videos and songs. As a result, these music video presentations have modified the original Japanese Lolita aesthetic, causing waves of discontent in the Lolita subculture.

Members of the Lolita subculture have a distinctive appearance, inspired and influenced by Victorian-era porcelain dolls; anime, and manga characters (Figure 1); Western literary characters; visual-*kei* bands and celebrities; and global popular culture. A Lolita's dress modestly conceals her mature body beneath ornately elaborate garments adorned with lace, ribbons, ruffles, and bows; she poses and conducts herself in order to create a surreal and fantastic childlike appearance; and she communicates *kawaii* characteristics—hyper-cute and hyperfeminine—with her dress, poses, and mannerisms.

Female Lolis are far more common than males. The male Lolitas tend to follow one of two forms. The first is an *ōji,* inspired by Victorian-era boy's dress. He wears trousers or short pants and a vest or jacket often made of velvet, with knee socks and a cap. The *ōji* dress may also be worn by a female Lolita wanting to achieve the male Lolita aesthetic, like a Western tomboy. The second type is a male who cross-dresses to visually communicate characteristics of a female Lolita. Mana, the former lead singer for Malice Mizer, is an example.

The Lolita subculture has been placed under a microscope in Japan and internationally, and has received varied interpretations and mixed reviews. One popular interpretation is that these Lolitas are in some way representative of Nabokov's character. The subculture's use of the name makes this is an all-too-easy interpretation; however, the Japanese Lolita subculture has redefined the name to create a new meaning that suits its own purposes. This new meaning reflects the modest, innocent, graceful, polite, and *kawaii* image of a Japanese Lolita; however, it also plays suggestively with the idea of a young girl as a forbidden sexual object. Japanese Lolitas claim they are not attempting to be sexually alluring and that they are frequently ostracized



FIGURE 1. Visual representation of the Lolita style appropriating Victorian-era fashion details. From the Body Line online catalog (www.bodyline.co.jp).

for a style of dress and a subcultural affiliation that lie outside the acceptable norms of the dominant Japanese culture. But despite this claim, Lolitas are still the focus of sexual attention from adult Japanese men. As a result, the Lolita subculture has been criticized for its naïveté, especially given the role the aesthetic plays in the "Lolita complex" or *rorikon*—a sexual obsession or fetish directed toward young girls. For this reason, areas in Japan where Lolitas gather are patrolled by police and security to protect women from stalkers and predators. These different depictions of Lolitas within popular culture demonstrate varying interpretations and misinterpretations of the subculture, and the subculture itself is a complicated space that informs and is informed by these depictions.

The Lolita aesthetic—that is, her ritualized appearance and performance—is perhaps one of the most important aspects of the subculture. A Lolita wears dresses that deemphasize and cover her adult female (or male) body, resulting in a childlike silhouette with a minimal amount of skin showing. Her hair is often worn in curls and/or bisected into ponytails, with bonnets and bows. Makeup is used to create a more youthful appearance, such as large eyes and blemish-free skin, to the point of recreating the facial texture of a porcelain doll. Accessories often include stuffed animals and dolls. Outsiders often assume the childlike appearance of the Japanese Lolitas is an attempt to further represent Nabokov's Lolita. But members of the Lolita subculture argue that the novel's character did not dress as a Victorian-era doll, and they contend that the Lolita aesthetic radiates an anachronistic kind of empowerment.

LOLITA GENRES

The Lolita subculture is made up of many individual genres of Lolis. Each genre has specific dress (i.e., clothing, hairstyles, accessories, and make-up), poses, and mannerisms that follow the Lolita aesthetic, and each genre offers different insights into the subculture as a whole.[7] The genres discussed below—Classic Lolita, Sweet Lolita, and Gothic Lolita—are just a sampling of the many and varied Lolita genres; I have chosen these to provide a framework for understanding the Lolita aesthetic as it is utilized by the Lolita subculture.

Classic Lolita

The Classic (or Traditional) Lolita is the most basic of the Lolita genres because it presents the fundamental elements of the Lolita aesthetic (Figure 2). This Lolita is inspired primarily by *Alice in Wonderland* and Victorian porcelain

dolls. Her dress deemphasizes the bust and hips with a flattened bodice, high waistline, and full skirt that extends past the knees (with volume created by layers of underskirts that further conceal the hips). The clothing is often a solid color or a floral or fruit print, partially covered by a white or pastel apron. The Classic Lolita's hair is often worn in ringlets with a head covering, usually a bonnet. Accessories may include a small purse, stuffed animal (i.e., teddy bear or Hello Kitty), and/or parasol. A Classic Lolita poses to evoke the illusion of being a very young girl, i.e., with knees together and toes pointed inward, head slightly lilted to one side. The Classic Lolita is closely associated with the Sweet Lolita and Country Lolita, but all the Lolita genres include numerous elements established by the Classic Lolita.



FIGURE 2. Classic Lolita Style. From the Body Line catalog.

Sweet Lolita

The Sweet Lolita or *Ama Roriita* is extremely popular, due in part to the genre's excessive use of *kawaii*. This Lolita genre is also inspired by *Alice in Wonderland* and perhaps best portrays the Victorian doll aesthetic (Figure 3), although it is also associated with a certain Rococo or Romantic excess. Her dress also deemphasizes the bust and hips with a flattened bodice, high waistline, and full knee-length skirt (with volume again created by layers of underskirts). The fabric for her dress is often a solid, pastel color, accented with bows, ruffles, and lace. The Sweet Lolita's hair is worn in ringlets, loose curls, or ponytails, with matching pastel-colored ribbons, hair bows, and lacy headbands. These Lolitas carry hyperfeminine accessories (heart-shaped purses, pastel parasols, and lacey handkerchiefs) and hypercute *kawaii* objects, such as teddy bears or Hello Kitty and Charmmy Kitty paraphernalia. Sweet Lolitas will assume postures and poses similar to those of the Classic Lolitas and convey the saccharin yet surreal image of a childlike doll. Stores that specialize in Sweet Lolita fashions include Angelic Pretty and Baby, the Stars Shine Bright.



FIGURE 3. Sweet Lolita Style. From the Body Line catalog.

Gothic Lolita

Gothic Lolita is also an extremely popular Lolita genre. The term "Gothic Lolita" is often used to reference the entire Lolita subculture; however, the Gothic Lolita is a distinct genre and should not be confused with the others or used as a catch-all descriptor. The Gothic Lolita is inspired not only by Victorian-era porcelain dolls but also the mourning clothes associated with Queen Victoria herself (Figure 4). Like the Classic Lolita and Sweet Lolita, the Gothic Lolita's dress also deemphasizes

the bust and hips with a flattened bodice, high waistline, and full skirt, with skirt volume varying depending on the desired effect. Dress lengths range from just above the knee to floor length. Gothic Lolitas dress primarily in black, in a variety of fabrics from satin to velvet, with white or red lace or ribbon accents. The hair is worn to frame the face, often in curls, with lacy head coverings. Accessories like a coffin purse, injured teddy bear, and/or black parasol continue the Gothic theme. Gothic Lolitas are sometimes described as looking like French maids; however, this comparison only considers the color combinations (i.e., black fabric with white lace) and misses the details. Gothic Lolitas pose like Classic or Sweet Lolitas, with a slightly bolder stance that helps convey a darker, moribund, and gloomy image. The singer Mana



FIGURE 4. Gothic Lolita Style. From the Body Line catalog.

often dresses as a Gothic Lolita. Subgenres include the Elegant Gothic Lolita (EGL) and Elegant Gothic Aristocrat Lolita (EGA or EGAL), which may feature more subtle accessories, less use of accent colors, and longer dresses.

LOLITA AESTHETIC AND IDENTITY

While each of these genres has distinct and distinguishable characteristics, they share certain commonalities that result in a united aesthetic. Most Lolitas, for example, utilize lace, bows, and ruffles in their dress, along with *kawaii* accessories. Still, the Lolita identity is often ambiguous and unclear, and it requires some effort and context to reconstruct that identity from her visual appearance. The following discussion explores the Lolita aesthetic and identity as visually presented in Loli dress.

Performance as Ritualized Identity

The Lolita presents her aesthetic for display in public spaces, in order to define and redefine her identity within Japanese culture. To sum up what has come before, Loli is a surreal amalgam of influences: anime or manga characters, Victorian-era porcelain dolls, the Nabokov Lolita character, visual-*kei* bands, and *kawaii*. But while the aesthetic is achieved through the use of clothing as described above, the Lolita identity is accomplished through a ritualized performance—poses and mannerisms—in combination with the designated dress.

According Victor Turner, a ritual consists of three phases: (1) preliminal phase (separation); (2) liminal phase (transition); and (3) postliminal phase (reincorporation).[8] During the first phase of a ritual, an individual separates herself or himself from the dominant culture or society. In the case of the Lolita, she foregoes everyday clothing and dresses herself as a specific genre of Lolita based on an established Lolita aesthetic portrayed in images and how-to articles in periodicals. Lolita Internet chat forums often include discussions about how Lolis consult *Kera* and *The Gothic and Lolita Bible,* as well as each other, for shopping and presentation advice. The purchase of designated clothes, makeup, and accessories that are not part of dominant Japanese culture (and not approved of by it) constitutes the separation phase of the ritual for Japanese youth who assume and develop the Lolita identity.

The second phase of a ritual is the transition phase, which indicates movement from one station or position to another. This phase includes the process of dressing as a Lolita, practicing poses and mannerisms used by similar

Lolita genres, and seeking the approval of other more experienced Lolitas. During this phase, a Lolita exists in a liminal space; she is not part of dominant Japanese culture and is not quite part of the Lolita subculture either.

THE LOLITA IDENTITY IS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH A RITUALIZED PERFORMANCE—POSES AND MANNERISMS—IN COMBINATION WITH THE DESIGNATED DRESS.

While a Lolita has ritualized the aesthetic of dress and performance, she also has the freedom to select, acquire, and combine specific items of dress, ornamentation, and details to create individual meaning and identity. In this way, she draws from a range of influences to create an amalgam that expresses the Lolita aesthetic.[9] Perhaps the best demonstration of this bricolage is the Gothic Lolita, who selects and borrows from Goth subculture (e.g., coffin-shaped backpacks and Ankhs), Japanese culture (e.g., *kawaii* objects—teddy bears in black dress and lace), and Victorian-era culture (e.g., the porcelain-doll aesthetic and mourning dress) to create new and meaning-laden fashions specific to the Gothic Lolita's identity. For example, the black patent leather Mary Jane platform shoes with lace details worn by Gothic Lolitas represent a combination of Victorian children's shoe style, lace details from Western children's dress, and the Gothic subcultural penchant for black platform shoes. Early in the history of the Lolita subculture, Lolitas would buy Goth Mary Jane platform shoes and attach lace and embellishments that they removed from second-hand children's clothing, in order to create the desired Lolita aesthetic; but today many stores carry ready-made shoes of this kind. In this way, Lolitas use bricolage to create fashions that remain within the Lolita aesthetic, yet express an individual identity.

The third phase of the ritual is a reincorporation phase, where individuals seek and find a new space within a given community. Once the Lolita presents herself to the subculture and the dominant culture in a public setting, she acknowledges and confirms her membership in the Lolita subculture as a Loli. Here it is important to recognize the performance spaces where she displays and visually communicates her aesthetic and identity, such as urban streets, stages, televisions, Web sites, films, and magazines.

In these spaces Lolitas experience a sense of the *carnivalesque*—a celebration or space where there is temporary release from expected and established order and norms, time, and space.[10] The carnivalesque is commonly divided into three types: comic presentations, abusive language, and ritual performances. It is the last that best describes the spaces where Lolitas dress, gather, and display their aesthetic for insiders and outsiders. Within this carnival, an individual is part of the subcultural collective. She ceases to be

herself; she *is* a Lolita. In these carnivalesque spaces Lolitas are free from the constraints of the dominant culture and free to display the Lolita aesthetic. They are also free to pose for photographs, which provides them with agency by making them objects of desire.

In addition to the agency gained from these carnivalesque presentations, the Lolita subculture also produces agency from the presentation of the Lolita aesthetic as a visual resistance. In Japanese culture, it is generally understood that it is better to dress according to dominant norms than suffer the disapproving gaze of the group.[11] Since the Lolita aesthetic exists outside these norms, its members often suffer public social rejection. Despite this rejection, or perhaps because of it, presenting the Lolita aesthetic provides subculture members with a way to visually and socially express their dissatisfaction with the dominant culture and their place within it.

LOLITAS ARE ATTEMPTING TO PROLONG CHILDHOOD WITH THE LOLITA AESTHETIC VIA THE USE OF *KAWAII*.

The Lolita aesthetic visually communicates membership and identity in the Lolita subcultural community. At the same time, Lolitas also visually express their individuality, most commonly through their unique accessory choices. For example, young women dress as Gothic Lolitas, and because of their similar dress, they are visually grouped as members of the Lolita subculture. Still, each of these Gothic Lolitas displays individual and personal accessories: one wears a small black coffin backpack; another carries a black velvet purse; and yet another has a white and black teddy bear dressed in black lace. So within the constraints of the Lolita aesthetic (which creates and supports a sense of community and belonging through visual similarity), the Lolita subculture also allows for individualism and self-expression, creating a space for both the Lolita subcultural community and the individual member. The subcultural community is associated with a consistent recognized aesthetic, but it is also dynamic and rich with texture and variation created by the individual interpretations of that aesthetic. Maintaining individuality within the Lolita subcultural community is a delicate balance, but necessary to give the Loli a sense of agency.

The Lolita subculture functions not just as a visually recognizable community but also as a safe space for communal and individual resistance. Lolitas use this communal space for exploration of a subcultural identity and of the Lolita aesthetic. This adherence to the subcultural community and Lolita aesthetic demonstrates that Lolitas are not willing to completely surrender the ideals of uniformity and community established by their parent culture.

Sweet Lolitas, for example, draw attention to themselves with their anachronistic dress, childlike mannerisms, and doll-like poses. But subsequently these stereotypes become objects of visual resistance against acceptable norms of dress and all that these norms stand for. Within the Lolita subcultural community, the Sweet Lolita is provided with the safety to present her individual Lolita aesthetic, and by maintaining her resistance and agency, she in turn empowers the subculture itself.[12]

Kawaii

The concept of *kawaii* seems ubiquitous in Japanese culture, and it is a significant part of the Lolita aesthetic and identity. By exploring the relationship between Lolita and *kawaii,* it is possible to understand aspects of Lolita that go beyond the Nabokov character, living doll, sexual fetish, or transnational object. Japan seems obsessed with all things *kawaii,* and Lolitas reconnect to childhood through the use of *kawaii* objects,[13] which embody and visually communicate much more than "cute" or "feminine/cute"; they also represent a desire for empathy, infantilism, compassion, and (dis)approval within the understood and hierarchical power structure.[14] Therefore, carrying or wearing *kawaii* objects allows the Lolitas to hold on to and nonverbally communicate their childlike perspective toward the outside dominant culture, a culture that could be interpreted as playing the parental role. In this way, Lolitas also garner compassion and interest when they present *kawaii* objects, characteristics, and images, which indicate nostalgia for a past era and a desire to escape adult responsibilities for the carefree days of youth. In essence, Lolitas are attempting to prolong childhood with the Lolita aesthetic via the use of *kawaii.*

Kawaii serves an additional purpose within the Lolita aesthetic: it also creates a hyperfeminine and hypercute visual identity for Lolitas. From dress to mannerisms, the way Lolitas employ *kawaii* is said to give the viewer a feeling of "*moe*"—a sense of intense attraction and contentment for things that have youthful, feminine attributes. A Sweet Lolita, for example, presents *kawaii* in excess and is often compared to sugary, sweet objects, such as candy (e.g., a lollipop or loli) and desserts. Moreover, the Sweet Lolita also exhibits stereotypical feminine characteristics (wearing lacy dresses, hair ribbons, and shoes with bows) in excess. From the standpoint of Japanese women's struggle for equality, this anachronistic portrayal of females as living dolls would seem to undermine the feminist position. For the outsider, Lolita is a representation of a woman as an object to be played with, an ideal girl to be loved or possessed, who manifests the culture's desire for virginal youth.

For a Lolita, though, this aesthetic creates a safe space to be sexy and strong behind the protection of the childhood patina, and a way to be different while having subcultural sameness.[15]

Kawaii also satisfies Japan's nostalgia for previous eras, both Eastern and Western,[16] by *innocently* incorporating aspects of these "simpler times" into contemporary life. The use of *kawaii* within Japanese culture is intrinsically tied to "neo-romantic notions of childhood,"[17] a childhood that is further removed from contemporary trappings and responsibilities by being located in another time period. The Lolita subculture's use of the Lolita aesthetic is an extreme example of seeking to experience the simplicity of the Victorian era by creating and wearing anachronistic fashions. But the Lolita subculture has not only borrowed from this historic era but also redefined it in a way that suits its own needs, as something that exists outside space and time—a "neo-Victorian" era. Applied to the fashions, poses, and mannerism that created the Lolita aesthetic, this neo-Victorian perspective helps the Lolita achieve a type of escape from dominant Japanese ideology, culture, and society.

Objects of desire have power; moreover, desire and power are interdependent in the same way that sameness and otherness are interdependent.[18] This helps explain the power and agency that Lolitas have acquired by incorporating the sameness of the dominant culture—for example, *kawaii* characteristics—into the subcultural otherness of the Lolita identity, an identity that simultaneously also resists and subverts the dominant culture's power structures and the way they disadvantage Japanese women. This is how Lolita performs and achieves power and agency through her appearance.

Transnational Object

A key component of any subculture is the way that it commodifies and consumes goods and activities in a way that renews and stimulates the borrowing culture.[19] In fact, part of the initial creation of the Lolita aesthetic began with the consumption of specific elements from Western culture. In the same way that the Japanese have consumed other aspects of Western culture, such as blue jeans and rockabilly, Lolitas selected and consumed aspects of the Victorian era and redefined them as something uniquely Japanese.[20] The Victorian-era dolls and dress were removed from their original Western context, which allowed their assimilation and incorporation into Japanese culture as the Lolita aesthetic.

The commodification of the Lolita aesthetic may actually have begun within the subculture itself. For example, celebrity Lolita subculture members Kana and Mana, who are also singers in visual-*kei* bands, have posed

as Gothic Lolitas for magazines. In 1999, Mana started his own Gothic Lolita fashion label called Moi-même-Moitié. Another example of the commodification and consumption of the Lolita aesthetic is the *Gothic and Lolita Bible* series (2000–), marketed by and for Lolitas. It features various pictorials of Lolitas, patterns and sewing instructions for Lolita fashions, and how-to tips, all of which shaped the Lolita aesthetic. The cover illustrations by Mihara Mitsukazu for the first eight issues also inspired and informed the Lolita aesthetic. The *Gothic and Lolita Bible* provides the means for both commodification and consumption of the Lolita aesthetic from both inside and outside the Lolita subculture.

TODAY IN JAPAN, THERE ARE MANY RETAIL STORES DEDICATED TO THE SALE OF LOLITA FASHIONS, WITH SEVERAL EMERGING IN THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN AS WELL.

The Lolita aesthetic has been further commodified and consumed within broader popular culture, specifically through its portrayal in anime and manga. *Rōzen Maiden,* for example, is a manga, anime, and video game franchise inspired by the Lolita subculture and portrays a variety of Lolita genres. All of the characters are living dolls who have characteristics, dress, and mannerisms based on Lolita genres. The character Shinku, for instance, could be classified as an Elegant Gothic Aristocrat Lolita based on her dark, elegant dress and mature mannerisms. Another aspect of the *Rōzen Maiden* phenomenon is the practice of cosplayers mimicking the dress of their favorite characters at anime and manga conventions. This mimicking complicates the consumption and commodification of the Lolita aesthetic because Lolita cosplayers are not truly part of the Lolita subculture, nor do they necessarily understand the Lolita aesthetic. As anime and manga consume and commodify elements from the Lolita subculture, they begin to circulate on a global scale and may even be transformed and reflected back into the subculture itself. All of these processes provide opportunities to explore new ways of understanding the Lolita aesthetic.

Today in Japan, there are many retail stores dedicated to the sale of Lolita fashions, with several emerging in the United States and Great Britain as well.[21] And there are a limited but growing number of online Lolita fashion boutiques.[22] This commodification and consumption of the Lolita aesthetic on a global scale has created a "mass marketed" Lolita subculture. It is through this global appropriation and reinterpretation that the Lolita achieves her role as a transnational object, as well as her role as an object of resistance, agency, and nostalgia.

To sum up, presentation of the Lolita aesthetic creates a visual form of

resistance against the dominant culture and provides both the subculture and its members with agency and identity. Lolitas communicate nonverbally and reveal that identity through a highly complex visual appearance. This aesthetic uses elements from both the East and the West in a way that represents a resistance to the dominant Japanese ideology and culture. The Lolita identity redefines the role of women in particular, through its empowered, even extraordinary qualities. At the same time, this aesthetic is based in part on visually communicating hyperfeminine and hypercute characteristics through the use of *kawaii* objects (as well as ritualized dress, poses, and mannerisms), and these hypercute, hyperfeminine characteristics can be interpreted and misinterpreted in various ways. For example, the subculture provides its members with a safe space to escape everyday life, but this may constitute either a positive form of resistance and agency, or a nostalgic and anachronistic evasion (or perhaps both).

Individual members of the Lolita subculture interpret the Lolita aesthetic in unique ways that play a significant role in creating and maintaining the subcultural community. But at the same time, this agency is diffused as the aesthetic is consumed and commodified by those inside and outside the subculture, with the result that the Lolita is becoming a transnational object to be bought and sold. Still, the Lolita aesthetic subversively empowers Lolis to extend themselves into spaces and ways otherwise unavailable to them, creating a wholly unique subcultural identity.

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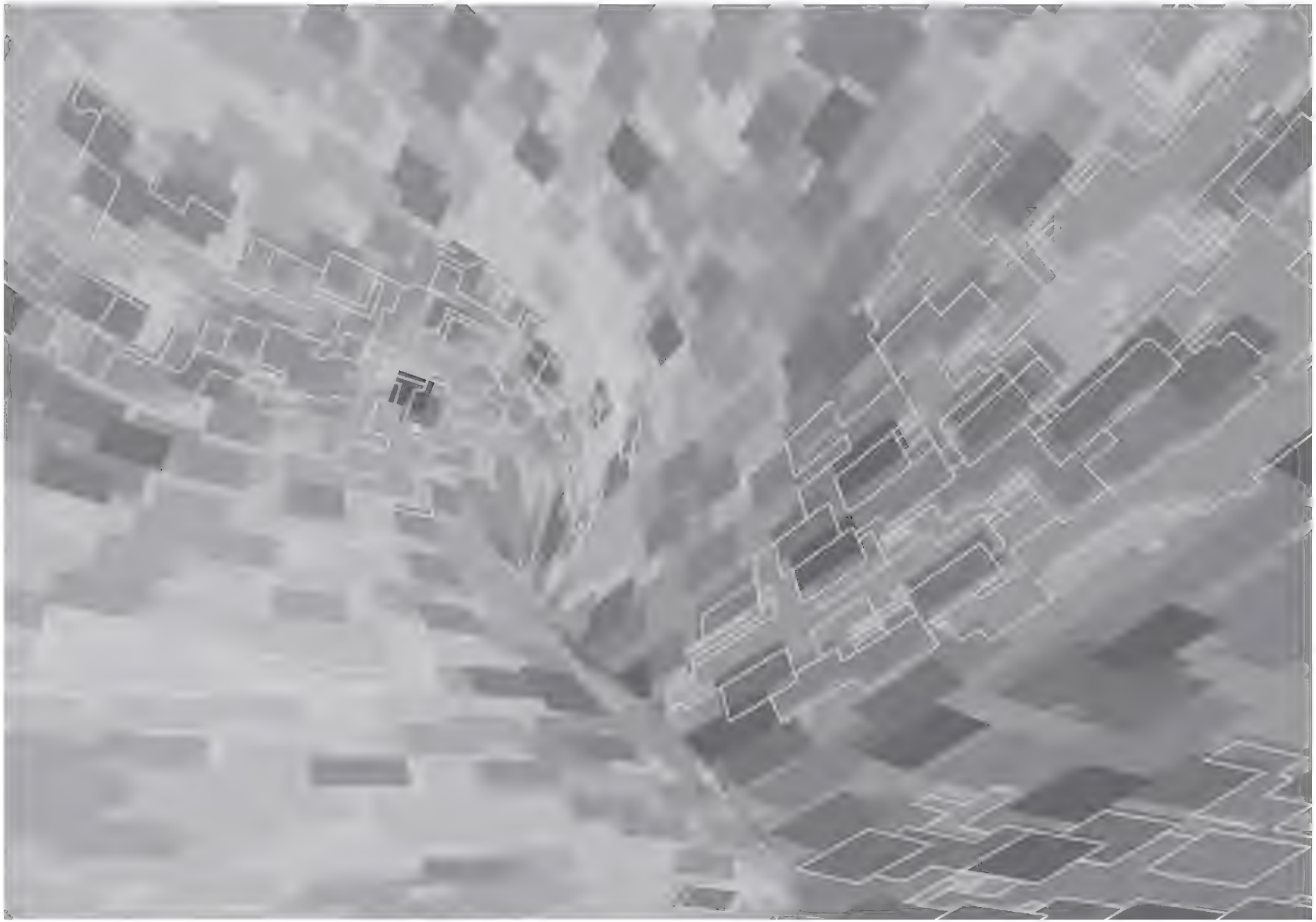
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20. Aoyama and Cahill, *Cosplay Girls,* 4–5.

21. Yuniya Kawamura, "Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion," *Current Sociology* 54, no. 5 (2006): 784–801.

22. These stores include Angelic Pretty (www.angelicpretty.com/), Baby, the Stars Shine Bright (www.babyssb.co.jp/), Blaspheminа's Closet (www.blaspheminascloset.com/), Delirium *Kawaii* (www.deliriumclothing.com/kawaii/index.htm), Metamorphose (www.metamorphose.gr.jp/english/index.html), Moi-même-Moitié (www.rakuten.co.jp/moi-meme-moitie/), and Victorian Maiden (http://www.victorianmaiden.com/).



NATSUME FUSANOSUKE

Translated by Margherita Long

Introduction by Hajime Nakatani

Komatopia

INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades Natsume Fusanosuke (incidentally, a descendent of Natsume Soseki, the towering figure of modern Japanese literature) has emerged as a central figure in manga criticism. Aside from his encyclopedic knowledge of manga history and his critical acumen, what distinguishes Natsume from many of his fellow critics and scholars is his background as a professional manga author. While the bulk of his recent output falls squarely within the domain of criticism, his intimate understanding of the craft of manga composition and penmanship served to bring to the field a rich awareness of the medium's formal and stylistic density. Natsume has also inaugurated the new genre of "manga criticism through manga," an example of which is translated here.[1]

This piece is the first in a series discussing the frames that divide a manga page into discrete elements. (In Japanese these discrete boxes are called *koma*, which gives the series its name.) The frame is a particularly salient and fertile embodiment of the question of "limit," and not only in the literal sense that it serves to limit and to organize the shifting scope of visibility in the unfolding

of a manga work. More fundamentally, it constitutes the most basic order of manga storytelling, the threshold beneath which the basic coherence and legibility of manga unravels. As such a safeguard of manga's narrative order, the formal question of the frame also resonates with the thematics of order and disorder, self and other, and humans and nonhumans that preoccupy many of the contributions in this issue. While Natsume is here primarily concerned with the formal and narratological functions of the frame, his experiments toward the end of the piece underscore this underlying unity of formal and ideological orders by destabilizing both, literally in one stroke of the framing pen. This insight opens a fertile avenue to explore the ways form and content intersect in manga. One may begin to wonder, for instance, whether Tezuka Osamu's persistent plays with the frame have something to do with his no-less-persistent preoccupation with the tenuous line dividing humans and nonhumans. This, of course, is the theme explored in many of the essays included in this volume, especially those by Yomota and Ōtsuka.

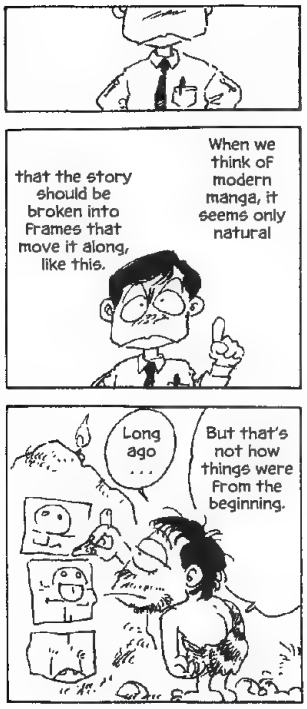
Note

1. This manga appears in *Natsume Fusanosuke manga gaku: Manga de manga o yomu* (Natsume Fusanosuke's manga criticism: Reading manga through manga) (Chikuma Shobō 1992), 163–68; first published by Daiwa Shobō in 1988. Note that we have omitted the diacritics to conform with North American manga style (and manga fonts). The name we would write "Ōnyūdō" elsewhere in the volume appears here as "Onyudo." Likewise for Taishō, Shōwa, Shishido Sagyō, and *Supiido Tarō*.

夏目房之介

コマ論ピア

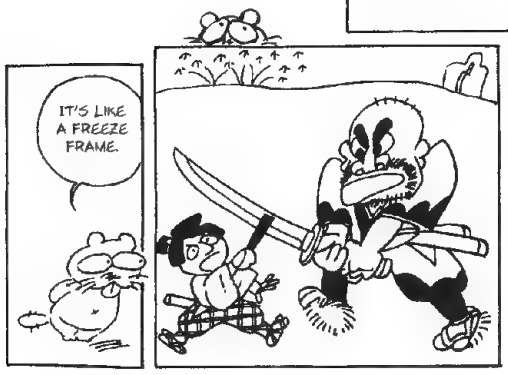
Vol. 1


When we think of modern manga, it seems only natural
that the story should be broken into frames that move it along, like this.
Long ago . . .
But that's not how things were from the beginning.



There were words to explain the story or satire, and pictures to accompany.

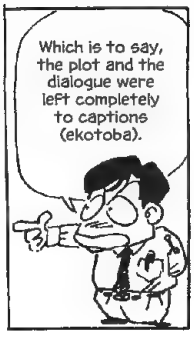
It was like what today we call "illustration."

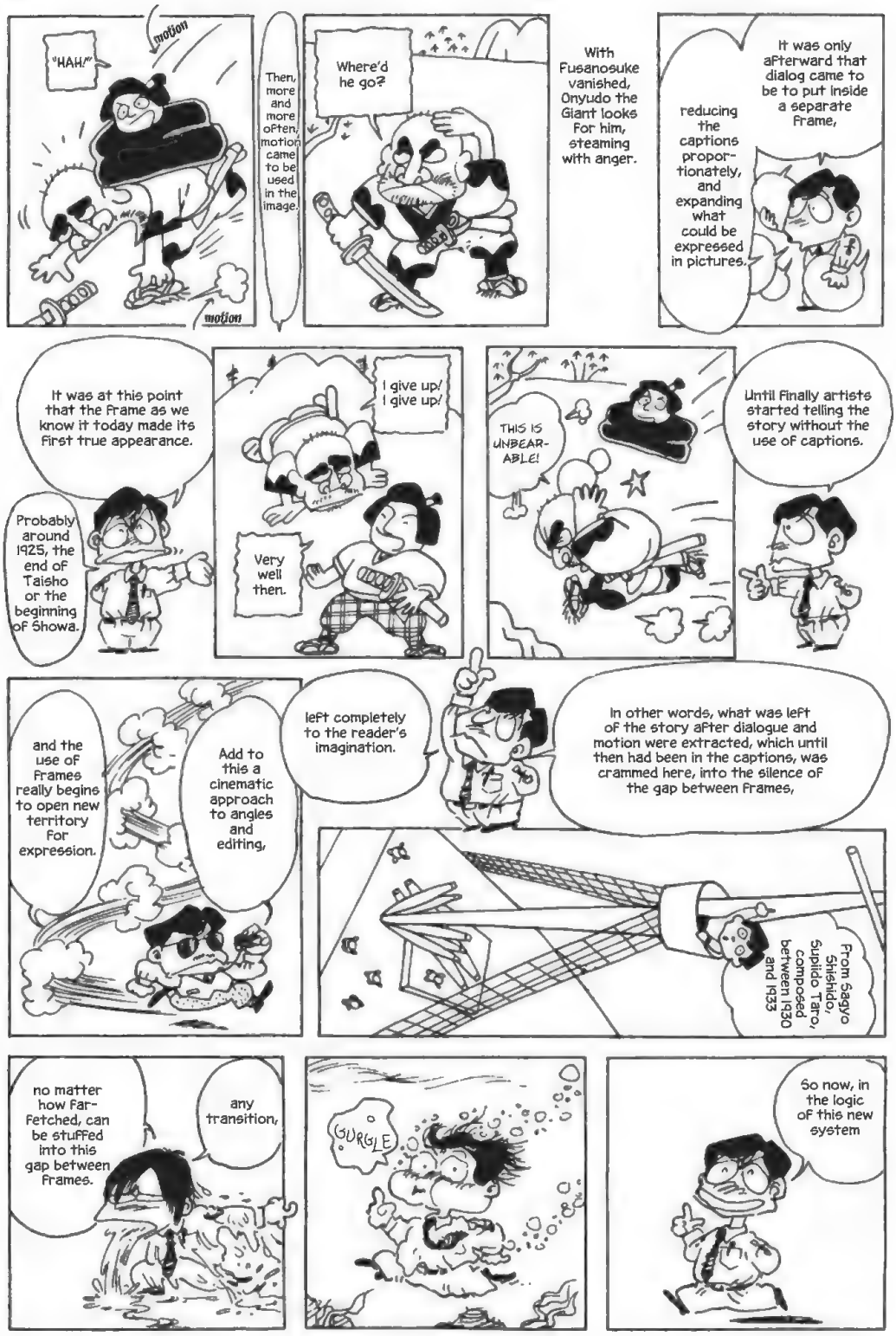


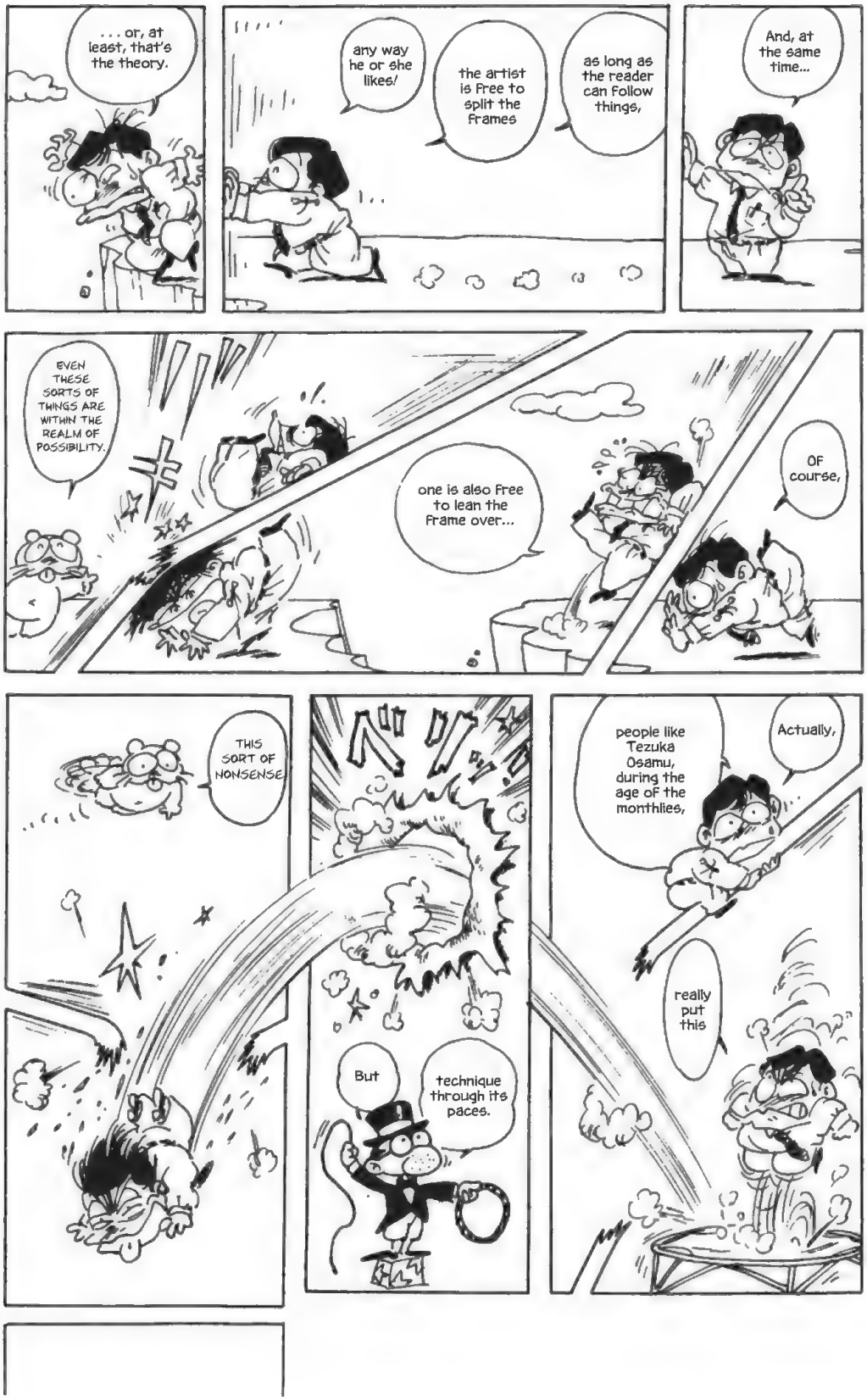
Gripping his 14-foot sword, Onyudo the Giant launched a Full Frontal attack.

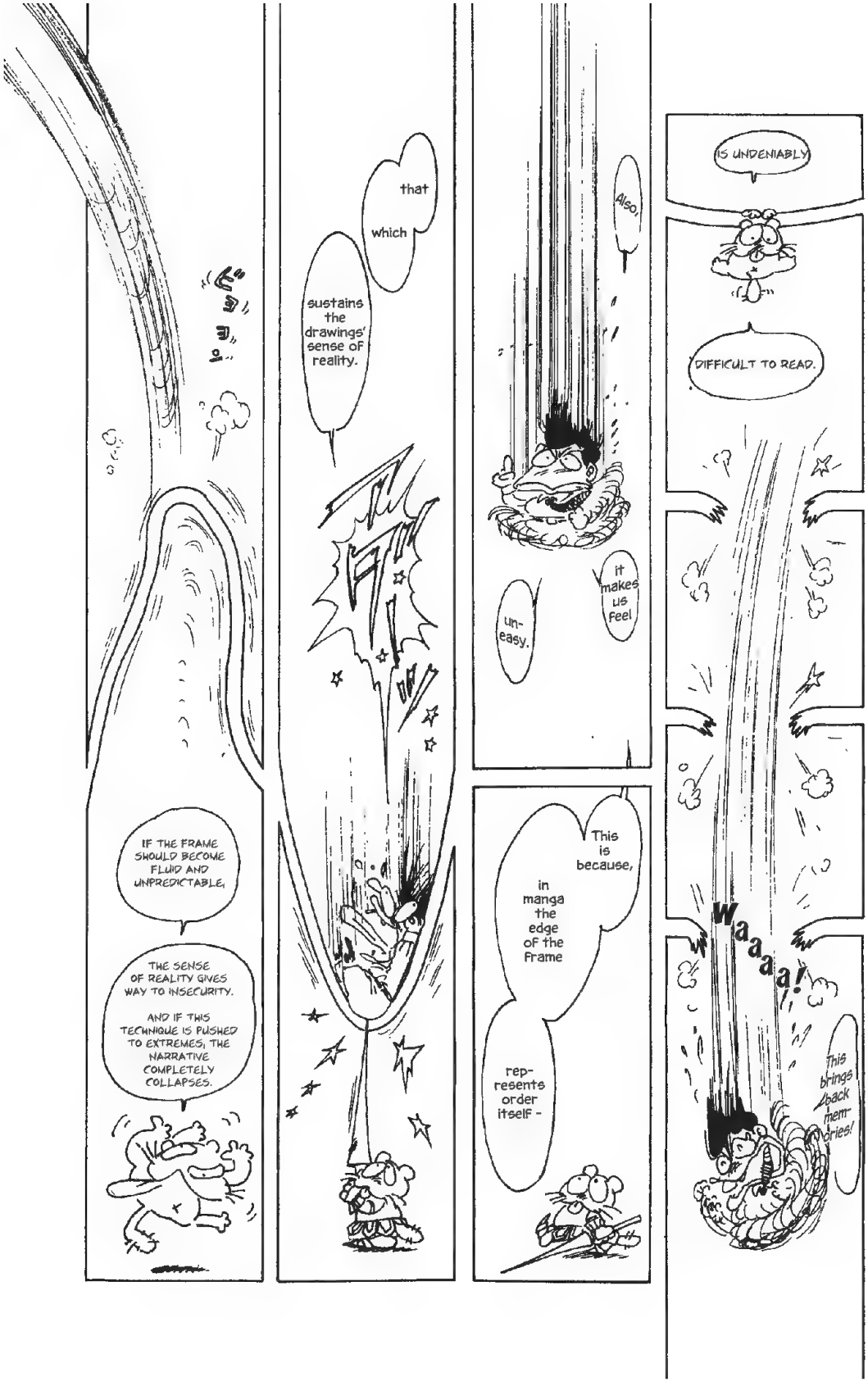
Meeting it smartly with his iron-ribbed Fan, Fusanosuke said "Slash away, Slasher!"

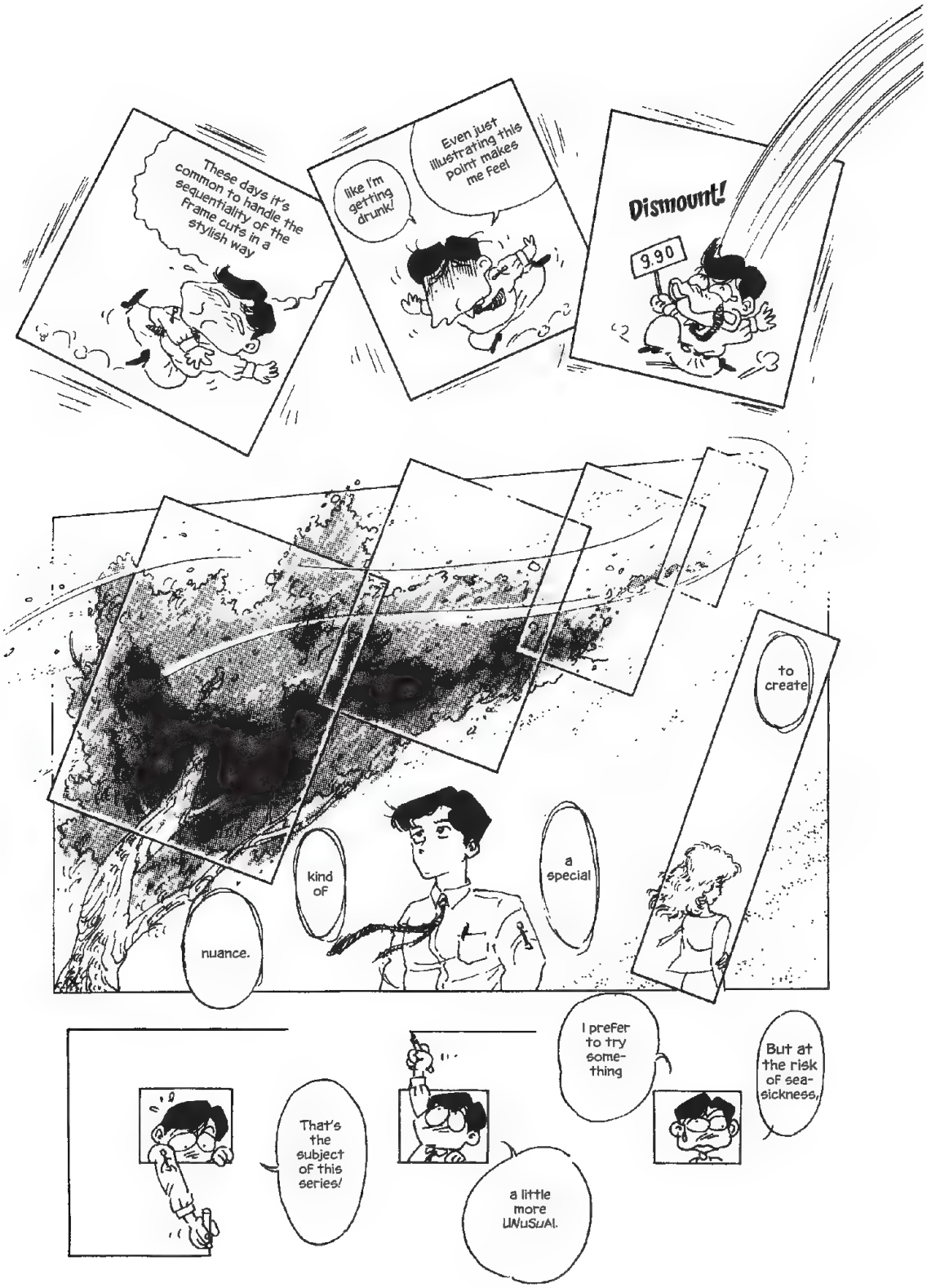
Or so it seemed he was about to say, just before he vanished.

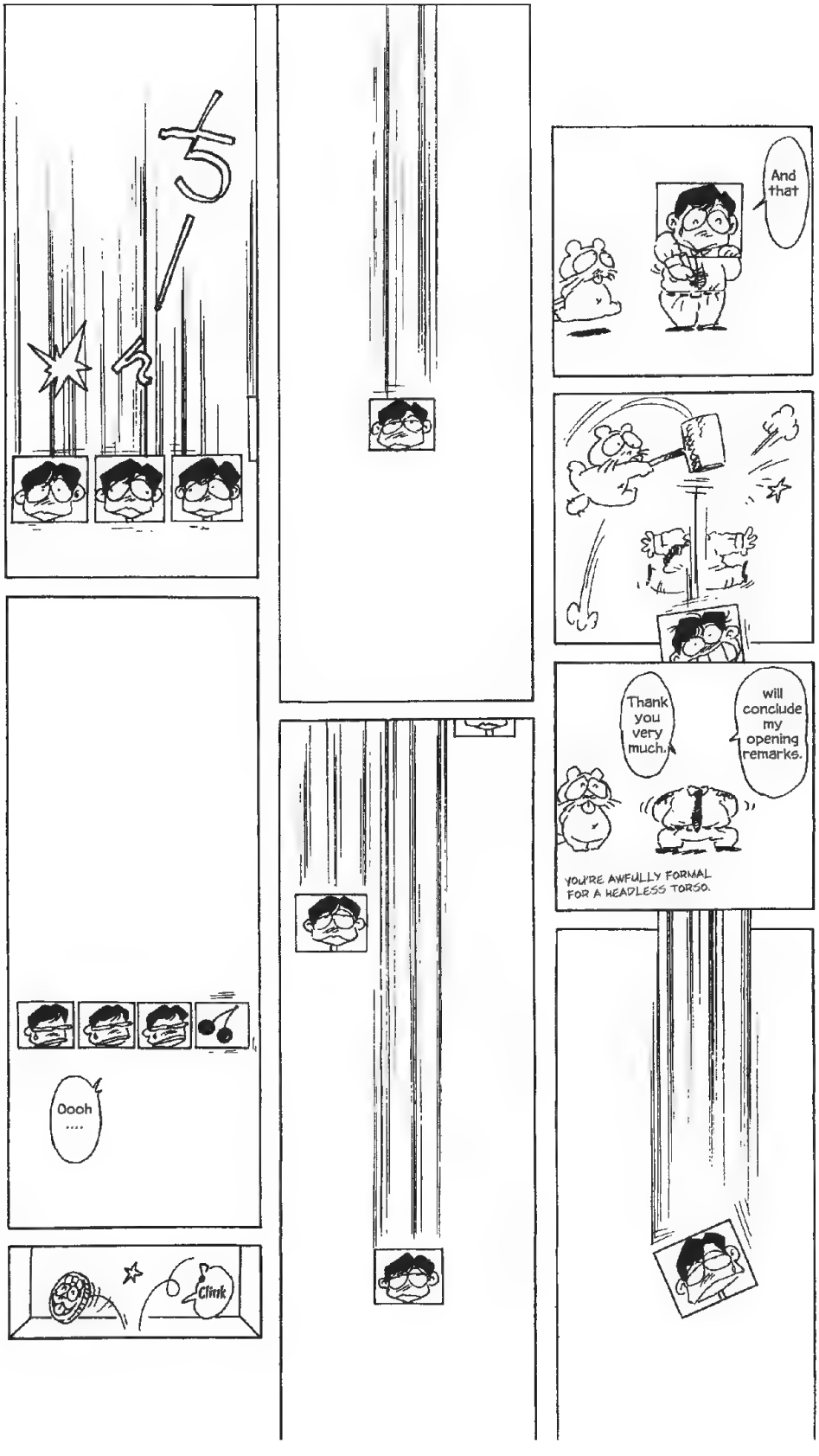



motion
"HAH!"
motion
Then, more and more often, motion came to be used in the image.
Where'd he go?
With Fusanosuke vanished, Onyudo the Giant looks for him, steaming with anger.
It was only afterward that dialog came to be to put inside a separate frame,
reducing the captions proportionately, and expanding what could be expressed in pictures.
It was at this point that the frame as we know it today made its first true appearance.
Probably around 1925, the end of Taisho or the beginning of Showa.
I give up! I give up!
Very well then.
THIS IS UNBEARABLE!
Until finally artists started telling the story without the use of captions.
and the use of frames really begins to open new territory for expression.
Add to this a cinematic approach to angles and editing,
left completely to the reader's imagination.
In other words, what was left of the story after dialogue and motion were extracted, which until then had been in the captions, was crammed here, into the silence of the gap between frames,
From Sagyo Shishido, Supido Taro, composed between 1930 and 1933
no matter how far-fetched, can be stuffed into this gap between frames.
any transition,
GURGLE
So now, in the logic of this new system


. . . or, at least, that's the theory.
any way he or she likes!
the artist is free to split the frames
as long as the reader can follow things,
And, at the same time...
EVEN THESE SORTS OF THINGS ARE WITHIN THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY.
one is also free to lean the frame over...
Of course,
THIS SORT OF NONSENSE
But
technique through its paces.
people like Tezuka Osamu, during the age of the monthlies,
Actually,
really put this


IF THE FRAME SHOULD BECOME FLUID AND UNPREDICTABLE,
THE SENSE OF REALITY GIVES WAY TO INSECURITY.
AND IF THIS TECHNIQUE IS PUSHED TO EXTREMES, THE NARRATIVE COMPLETELY COLLAPSES.
that which sustains the drawings' sense of reality.
Also, it makes us feel un-easy.
This is because, in manga the edge of the frame rep-resents order itself -
IS UNDENIABLY
DIFFICULT TO READ.
Waaaa!
This brings back mem-ories!

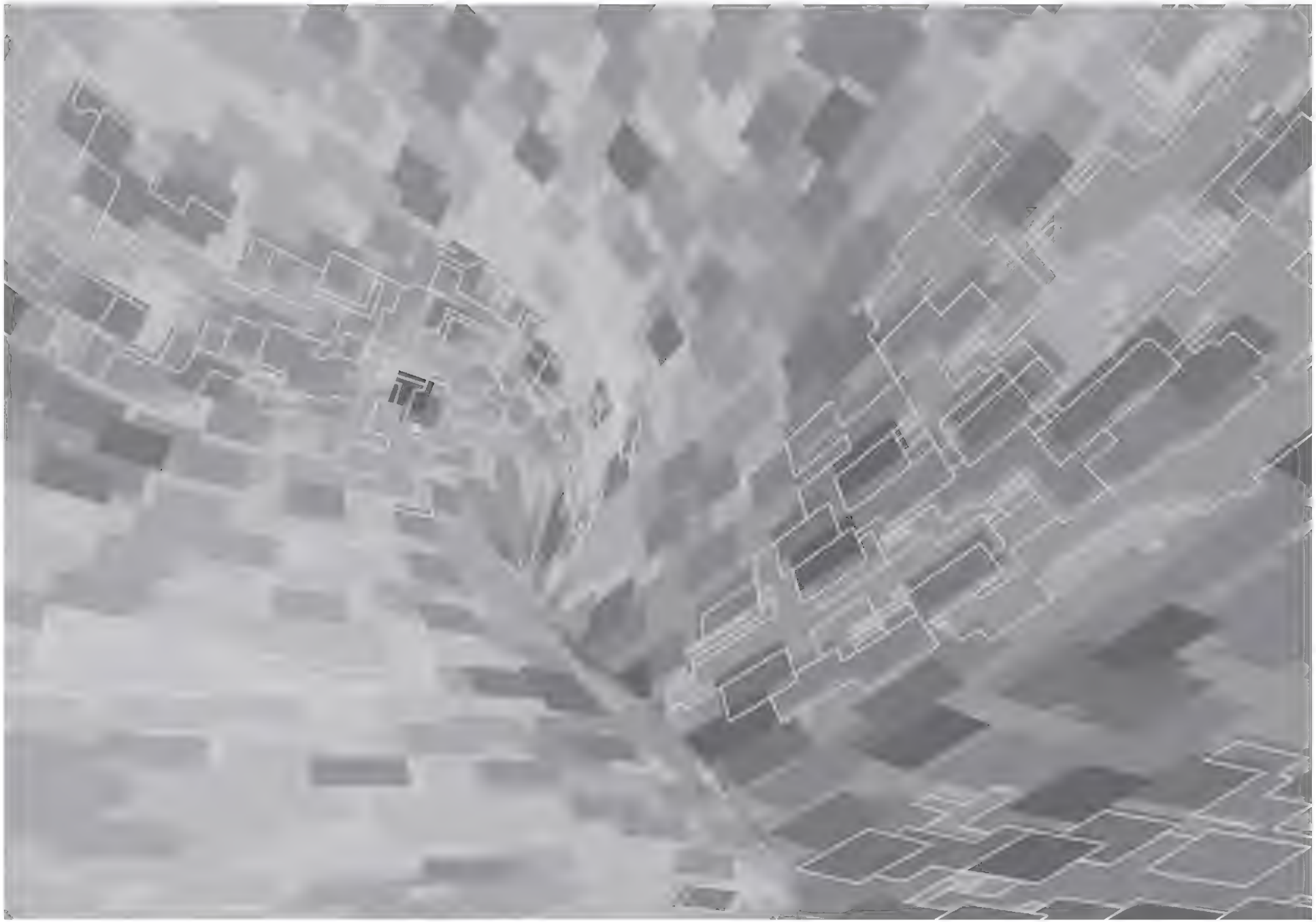

These days it's common to handle the sequentiality of the frame cuts in a stylish way
like I'm getting drunk!
Even just illustrating this point makes me feel
Dismount!
9.90
nuance.
kind of
a special
to create
That's the subject of this series!
a little more UNuSuAl.
I prefer to try some-thing
But at the risk of sea-sickness,


5
And that
Thank you very much.
will conclude my opening remarks.
YOU'RE AWFULLY FORMAL FOR A HEADLESS TORSO.
Oooh ....
Clink

人間と

Companions

With the Human



THOMAS LaMARRE

Speciesism, Part I: Translating Races into Animals in Wartime Animation

To scores of millions of participants, John Dower reminds us, World War II was a race war.[1] Among the many patterns of racial prejudice explored in his book *War without Mercy,* Dower discusses how the American media depicted the Japanese as animals: "A characteristic feature of this level of anti-Japanese sentiment was the resort to nonhuman or subhuman representation, in which the Japanese were perceived as animals, reptiles, or insects (monkeys, baboons, gorillas, dogs, mice and rats, vipers and rattlesnakes, cockroaches, vermin, or more indirectly, 'the Japanese herd' and the like)."[2] And yet, "without question . . . the most common caricature of the Japanese by Westerners, writers and cartoonists alike, was the monkey or ape."[3]

In the American animalization or bestialization of the Japanese enemy, Dower detects a general strategy of dehumanization. Behind this strategy is the idea that to depict someone as an animal is to strip away their very humanness, their humanity. In effect, both human animals and nonhuman animals are degraded through these dehumanizing, bestializing depictions. The racial imaginary, however, is not limited to the application of negative animal qualities to humans (bestialization). Friendly or positive animal images may imply strategies of racialization, too. For instance, when Dower

considers the American postwar transformation of the image of the Japanese from a horrifying ape or gorilla into a friendly pet chimp, he remarks, "that vicious racial stereotypes were transformed, however, does not mean that they were dispelled."[4] In other words, although he does not speak to it as such, Dower points to the persistence of this racial consciousness and racial typology whenever human animals are depicted as nonhuman animals.[5] This is what I call "speciesism."

Speciesism is a displacement of race and racism (relations between humans as imagined in racial terms) onto relations between humans and animals. The term speciesism was coined and is often used to indicate discrimination against nonhuman animals.[6] On the one hand, speciesism is a matter of blatant discrimination against animals, which comes of attributing "bestial," that is, negative characteristics to nonhuman animals and extending these negative attributes to humans. On the other hand, speciesism entails the displacement of problems associated with race relations onto species relations, and vice versa.[7] Speciesism thus comprises violence to nonhuman animals *and* to those designated as racial others. In this essay, it is the latter inflection of speciesism that concerns me primarily, the translation of racial differences into animal differences, in the context of Japanese animation. Moreover, the prevalence of speciesism in prewar and postwar Japanese animation implies important continuity between the prewar and postwar racial imaginary. My intent is not to declare a simple continuity between prewar and postwar Japanese thinking about race. Not only are there different inflections of speciesism in wartime animation, but also postwar animation responds to wartime speciesism in a variety of ways: unwitting replication, celebration, fascination, ambivalence, disavowal. There are unthinking responses and critical responses.

JAPANESE WAR MEDIA, IN CONTRAST TO THE AMERICAN, DID NOT TEND TO BESTIALIZE THE AMERICAN ENEMY.

Japanese wartime speciesism presents a contrast with American wartime speciesism. Dower reminds us that Japanese war media, in contrast to the American, did not tend to bestialize the American enemy. Dower is quick to remind us that this does not mean that Japanese propaganda was not dehumanizing: "No side had a monopoly on attributing 'beastliness' to the other, although the Westerners possessed a more intricate web of metaphors with which to convey this."[8] Dower stresses how Japanese tended to depict the American enemy as failed humans, as demons, ogres, or fiends. Crucial to his assessment is the representation of English and American enemies in Seo

Mitsuyo's 1945 animated film *Momotarō: Umi no shinpei* (Momotarō's divine army).[9] In this film, Japan's English-speaking enemies appear in human form but with horns on their head, reflecting their degraded and demonic stature, and suggesting that Japan's spiritual youthful purity and vigor, embodied in Momotarō, will dispel them (Figure 1).

In such not-entirely-dehumanizing depictions, Dower sees "symbolic ruptures" that "helped prepare the ground for discarding the antipodal stereotypes of pure Self and incorrigibly evil Other once Japan had acknowledged its defeat."[10] In effect, Dower detects a potential humanization or humanism encrypted within Japanese depictions of the American enemy. Oddly, however, in light of his remarks about how postwar American transformation of the vile simian into the cute pet chimp still constituted racism, Dower never considers the relation between humanization of the enemy (humanism) and racialization (racism).[11] Yet in his examples humanizing strategies and racializing procedures are intertwined.



FIGURE 1. The English commander, sporting a horn on his head, nervously addresses Momotarō (flanked by his companion animals) in English to the effect that "you're placing us in a difficult situation," which is translated into Japanese in the accompanying title.

What is more, Dower passes over Japanese depictions of the empire's colonized peoples and non-Western enemies, which gives the impression that Japanese war media did not engage in speciesism. In animated films, however, Japan's wartime speciesism is impossible to ignore. In *Momotarō: Umi no shinpei,* for instance, as in the other prewar *Momotarō* animated films, colonial peoples appear as animals, as indigenous animals. They appear as cute and friendly animals that fairly cry out for nurture. What is more, in *Momotarō: Umi no shinpei* native critters happily lend their strengths and abilities to the construction of a Japanese airstrip and military enclave. The cuteness of local animals meshes nicely with their status as a readily available and willing source of labor. This is a kind of speciesism unlike the American bestialization of the enemy. It hints at a different imaginary at work in the translation of racial problems into human–animal relations.

This difference comes partly of Japan's conscious evocation of, and resistance to, American racism. As is well known (but infrequently addressed in discussions of Japanese cultural production), the Japanese war was couched as one of racial liberation, emancipating "Asians" or "people of color" from "white demons" or Western imperialists. As Dower points out, the Japanese media consistently expressed indignation over how Westerners looked on colored people in general as simply "races who should serve them like domestic animals."[12] Yet Japanese wartime media do not eschew speciesism. Although Japanese animated films do not bestialize the enemy or the colonized in order to dehumanize them, the depiction of colonized peoples as cute, friendly, and accommodating native critters is hardly innocent. The Japanese imaginary is one of "companion species" rather than one of wild animals to be hunted and exterminated or one of domestic animals to be exploited. The imaginary of companion species is related to a specific geopolitical imaginary.[13]

Significantly, as Dower's remarks about America's postwar transformation of the ugly simian into the cute pet ("to the victors, the simian became a pet, the child a pupil, the madman a patient")[14] suggest, Japanese wartime speciesism not only shows signs of overlap and intersection with the geopolitical imaginary of American speciesism but also seems to anticipate American postwar speciesism in which the defeated quasi-colonial other is transformed into a companion species: the ape or gorilla becomes a pet chimp. To make a long argument exceedingly short, it is my opinion that Japanese wartime speciesism anticipates or intersects with American postwar speciesism, because of an overlap in their geopolitical concerns.[15] Both wartime Japan and postwar America tried to imagine multinational or multiethnic empire,

which entails an effort to imagine the productive coexistence of different communities that are frequently typed as races, racial communities, racial ethnicities, or national races. Within the framework of multiethnic empire, speciesism—translating race relations into species relations—not only promises a way of working through racism but also entertains hopes of moving beyond racism altogether. It is here, in Japanese wartime animation, that the problem that Dower seems intent on avoiding—that of the relation between racism and humanism in the context of multiethnic empire—becomes impossible to overlook.

FOR HISTORICAL AND MATERIAL REASONS, ANIMATION HAS COME TO PROVIDE A PRIME SITE FOR SPECIESISM.

The central hypothesis of this essay is that, for historical and material reasons, animation has come to provide a prime site for speciesism. Although in this paper I pay less attention to the dynamics of manga than those of animation, I think that the commonalities between certain lineages of manga and animation will become obvious in the overall discussion of speciesism. In part one of this essay, I will present some general reflections on animation's love affair with animals in order to set the stage for a discussion of speciesism in Japanese animation. Subsequently, as a first step toward delineating some of the range of speciesism in Japanese animation, I will briefly consider how speciesism overlaps with, yet differs from, racism. Particularly important in part one are the animated films based on the manga character Norakuro, or "Stray Black," a series of films in which the Japanese dog regiment does battle with a range of animal enemies. In part two, I will continue the discussion of wartime animation looking at the depictions of colonial peoples in the *Momotarō* films and will conclude with an analysis of the legacy of wartime speciesism in the works of Tezuka Osamu.[16]

ANIMATION'S LOVE OF ANIMALS

Animation loves animals. In fact, animals are such a staple of animated films that it is hard to think about animation without thinking of scenes of nonhuman animals frolicking, dancing, leaping, and of course, being bent, crushed, and stretched. There is a sort of "kinetophilia" associated with animated animals, a sheer delight in movement, as well as a fascination with plasticity and elasticity, which Eisenstein called "plasmaticness" and I will call plasmaticity.[17] The deformation and reformation of characters—stretching, bending, flattening, inflating, shattering—becomes a source of pleasure in itself and,

as Eisenstein notes, implies an ability of an animated form to attach itself to any life form.

As Ōtsuka Eiji notes in his essay in this volume, the elasticity associated with animated characters imparts a sense of their invulnerability and even immortality: they appear resilient and resistant to injury and death. As such, plasmaticity implies another register of deathlessness—the transformative ability of animated characters to adopt the qualities and shapes of a range of life forms (other species) and of developmental moments (phases and stages). In this respect, the sensibility of animation vis-à-vis animals differs profoundly from that of cinema.

THE PLASMATICITY OF CHARACTERS IN ANIMATION SEEMS TO ENCOURAGE ALL MANNER OF CRUEL AND VIOLENT DEFORMATIONS OF THE BODY FORM.

In his chapter on the history of cinema and cruelty to animals in *Animals in Film,* Jonathan Burt notes how cinematic images of animals have historically received a great deal of attention from animal advocates, to the point where film viewers have become more sanguine about violence to humans in cinema than they are about cruelty to animals. He concludes that the "split within the animal image—the artificial image that can never quite be read as artificial—is one that ruptures all readings of it."[18] Yet, even though the split in the cinematic animal image ultimately ruptures readings of it, Burt reminds us that such ruptures happen along specific lines: an underlying sense of the reality of the cinematic image has contributed to a set of conventions and expectations for the humane treatment of animals depicted in film.

Animation, in contrast, implies a different sense of the reality of the image, and the "animetic" treatment of the animal image need not eschew violence and cruelty. In fact, the plasmaticity of characters in animation seems to encourage all manner of cruel and violent deformations of the body form—as if taking slapstick gags to their limit, as is common in Looney Tunes, Ub Iwerks's Mickey Mouse, and vintage *Tom and Jerry* (lampooned so well in "Itchy and Scratchy" in *The Simpsons*). As Ōtsuka Eiji notes, American silent comedy had a powerful influence on animation, and Japanese animation also has its lineages of slapstick humor and violence in animation, which enable equally parodic excess in more recent edgy fare such as *Excel Saga* (1999–2000, *Ekuseru Saaga*), *Tamala 2010* (2004), or *Panda Z* (2004, *Pandaa zetto: The Robonimation*). Yet it is not necessary to take the capacity for bodily deformation to its limit in violence for the plasmaticity of animation to exert its hold on us. Even when bodily movement and transformation is handled lyrically with an insistence on grace and suppleness, animation imparts a different

sense of the powers of the body, which is commonly linked to animal or animalized bodies.

I don't wish to imply that cinema and animation cannot or do not overlap significantly. As is evident in recent films such as *Charlotte's Web* (2006), which use digital technologies and animatronics to construct talking animals with suitably expressive faces, animation and cinema can overlap a good deal. Nor do I want to imply that animation sanctions cruelty to animals or that animation does not have its conventions for dealing with violence. Rather, as both Sergei Eisenstein and Ōtsuka Eiji note, the inherent elasticity of the animetic animal image imparts a sense of its invulnerability to violence done to it. The animetic image seems to erase all traces of violence and even of death. Animation doesn't fret over the fragility and mortality of animals but celebrates their apparent invulnerability and immortality (lyrically and violently) and frequently extends these qualities to human animals.

Both cinema and animation today are caught up in a paradoxical situation, however. For instance, it should give us pause that, in an era of increasing urbanization and "mediatization" on a global scale, human animals have less and less contact with nonhuman animals, and pets tend to be the animals that most urbanized folk know best. As a result, media forms such as animation and cinema become a prime source, and maybe *the* prime source, of knowledge about a range of nonhuman animals. Akira Lippit expresses the paradox succinctly in his discussion of animals in film and philosophy, remarking that, in an age of massive extinction, in which the majority of nonhuman animals seem on the verge of disappearing from our world entirely, our media abound in images of animals. It is as if those vanishing animals return to us in spectral form, proliferating across media platforms, as cartoon characters, electronic pets, animatronic and SFX creatures in films, on stickers, in ads, on book covers, in a vain attempt to mark their presence at the moment of their global disappearance.[19] The image that comes to mind is that of the reddish alien phantoms in the first *Final Fantasy* movie, *The Spirits Within* (2001): the entire zoosphere of a distant planet, exterminated in a global war, is hurtled to Earth in the form of a great chain of ghostly life that haunts the human world with the possibility of planetary death. Much of our zoosphere is currently in danger of such a spectral existence, condemned to survive only on film and in other media, and it is hard not to see the proliferation of animated animals across media (and their transnational movement) in terms of a global panic formation: our attempt to capture animals and their nonhuman animality before they disappear actually is part of a process of erasing their lives and life worlds while frantically retaining them in spectral form.

Still, even though both cinema and animation seem equally caught up in this zoological panic formation that loves animals to death, cinema and animation have different ways of expressing their love for nonhuman animals. Not only are animals more prevalent in animation, but also animation seems bent on expressing animal invulnerability, where cinema tends to linger on animal fragility. (These are, of course, tendencies, not mutually exclusive oppositional categories.) Simply put, for historical, formal and material reasons, animation tends toward vitalism, animism, and animal powers.

One explanation for the prevalence of animals in animation has it that humans (or human animals, if you will) are much fussier about images of humans than about images of nonhumans, especially with respect to movement. Apparently, human viewers demand a higher degree of verisimilitude in the depiction and movement of human characters. Because humans are much more attentive to details when it comes to depictions of their own species than other species, the human viewer will accept a greater degree of deformation and simplification with nonhuman figures. Simply stated, animality and plasmaticity are mutually enabling. Consequently, if you're an animator who wants to experiment with, or push the limits of, the plasticity inherent in drawing figures for cel animation, using nonhuman animals allows you to sustain a sense of verisimilitude in action while allowing a great deal of leeway for deformations and transformations of the figure. Thus the use of nonhuman animals allows for heightened fluidity as well as intensified violence and abruptness of movement, whence animation's penchant for lyrically graceful motions in tandem with over-the-top slapstick, pratfalls, gags. This also explains why, from the earliest days of animated film, so many of the nonhuman animals in animation appear poised between human and animal—we see bipedal cats, monkeys, pigs, dogs, bears, and mice, with paws like hands, often in human attire, acting downright human—Norakuro the Stray Black dog, Felix the Cat, Mickey Mouse, Songokû the Monkey,[20] Cubby Bear, and so on. Are they animals or humans? Are these humanized animals or animalized humans?

Where cinema viewing tends to draw a line between humans and animals, treating the cinematic images of nonhuman animals as less artificial than those of humans, animation viewing does not draw a strict line between nonhuman animals and human animals. It would seem that cinema humanizes animals, while animation tends to animalize humans. This may derive from the ability of human viewers to detect the artificiality of human actors on film, and thus violence against humans concerns them less than that against animals—they sense that the humans are not real. In animation, however, it

ANIMATION SEEMS BENT ON EXPRESSING ANIMAL INVULNERABILITY, WHERE CINEMA TENDS TO LINGER ON ANIMAL FRAGILITY.

is less a matter of reality and artificiality than a matter of verisimilitude and plasmaticity. Whatever the reasons, what is important in this context is that animation delights in constructing zones where human and animal become indiscernible, where the animal opens into the human, and the human into the animal. It surely goes without saying that animation's love of animals is more for the delight of humans than for the benefit of nonhuman animals. But then maybe animation presents interesting possibilities for imagining the human–animal interface, to which we have never paid much critical attention.

As animation opens the human love affair with animals, that love takes a variety of forms: animals appear as loyal comrades in arms, as worthy foes, as advisors, as second selves, as therapists, as potential mates, as sexual objects. As with any love affair, unexpected obstacles and detours may appear, resulting in jealousies, quarrels, even battles, but also reunions and complex sympathies. There is no guarantee that things will turn out well, nor can we say definitively what it would mean for things to turn out well between humans and animals in the realm of animation. Uncertainty about the outcome arises in part because, even though animation appears ideally suited to reminding humans that they too are animals, affection can lead to ambivalence. After all, it is the nature of affection—insofar as it entails affect or affective responses—to take things out of circulation, to form self-sustaining circuits and feedback loops, precisely because affect does not allow for neat distinctions between subjects and objects. This is not necessarily a comfortable situation.[21]

Among the varied implications of animation's blurring of distinctions between human and animal—first and foremost evident in the prevalence of humanized animals or animalized humans, I am most interested here in how animation thus becomes an ideal site for translating race relations into species relations. The translation of races into species makes for a situation that is not so straightforward to critique as racial stereotyping. In this respect, racism in animation and manga demands some remarks, however brief.

It is relatively common to lament racial stereotypes of humans in early animation. This is the case with the depictions of Africans in Disney's *Trader Mickey* (1932). *Trader Mickey* stages a wild African village dance, drawing on "Black dandy" stereotypes in Sheldon Brooks's song "The Darktown Strutters' Ball" (1917), in which African Americans dress up like big shots but speak and behave like uneducated louts.[22] Yet David Gerstein, who presents this example on his Web site, also reminds us that such cartoons sometimes open

critical perspectives on the white fascination with black culture. In the cartoon *Showing Off* (1931), for instance, the portrayal of a white boy mimicking black culture also affords a way to see the boy's imitation as crude and ridiculous. And Gernstein concludes, "While still some distance from a real acceptance of Black contributions or acknowledgement of white racism, *Showing Off* is at least an interesting start."

Such fascination with racial others is equally evident in Japanese animation from the 1930s. In a Japanese animated short from the early 1930s (actual date unknown) based on a manga by Shimada Keizō, entitled *Bōken Dankichi—Hyōryû no kan* (The adventurous Dankichi: Adrift),[23] the young hero Dankichi and his little mouse friend are cast ashore on a far-off island where they strike a lion with an arrow. As they flee the lion, they encounter "natives" who look stereotypically African but, given the context, probably represent New Guineans or one of the peoples loosely designated at that time in Japan as "South Seas natives." Caught between lion and natives, Dankichi and his companion mouse leap into a tree and then onto the back of an elephant. Riding the elephant, they literally trample the natives who thereupon joyously crown Dankichi king of the island (Figure 2).



FIGURE 2. The native king, once conquered, happily places his crown on Dankichi's head.

This chapter of *Bōken Dankichi* is easy to critique, not only for its unenlightened, stereotyped depiction of Japan's colonized peoples but also for its use of a stock scenario of imperial desire in which the conquered or colonized people is ultimately asked to express its love for the conqueror or colonizer. The native king does not merely crown Dankichi as the new ruler of the island; he does so with delight and affection. The use of racial stereotypes and the expression of imperial desire is so obvious in this short animated romp that it almost defies criticism. This is fun colonialism, in which the interactions between colonizer and colonized appear in the guise of hyperactive yet harmless child's play. In order to frame colonialism as a playful adventure, however, *Bōken Dankichi* must also level the playing field, so to speak. If natives and their conqueror are to "play war," they must have some common ground. In *Bōken Dankichi,* this common ground appears briefly in a shot in which Dankichi and the native king literally bump noses (Figure 3).

This moment is notable for a couple of reasons. First, it is early example of the use of close-up in animation. In manga of the early 1930s, artists did not tend to use cinematic techniques such as close-up. For the most part, figures appeared in each manga frame from head to toe, and the same techniques

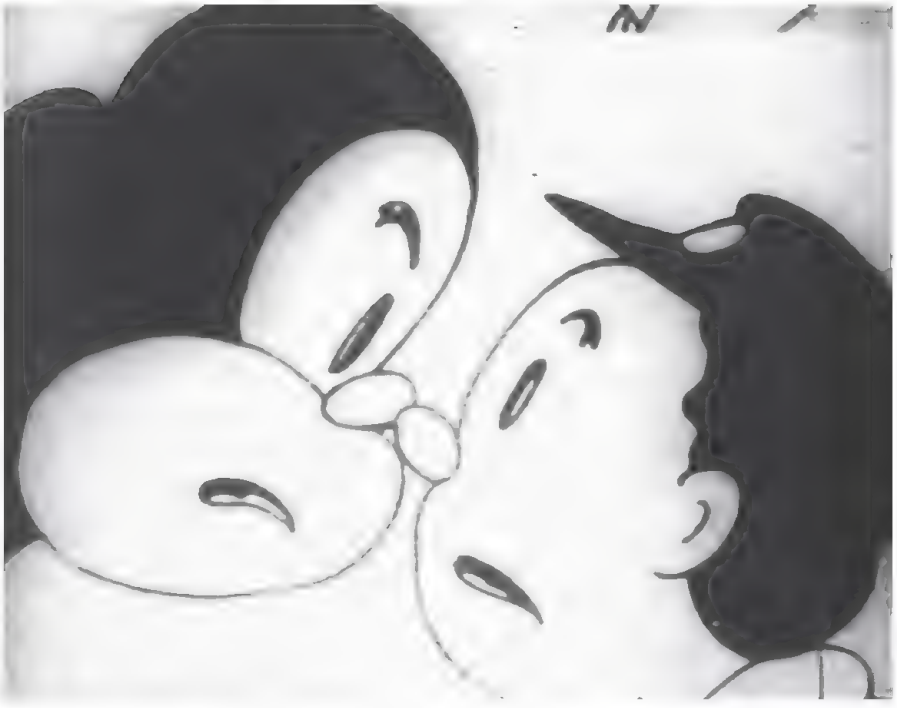


FIGURE 3. Dankichi and the "island native" bump noses.

extended to animated adaptations of manga. In this moment in *Bōken Dankichi,* however, the emphasis is on the faces in the manner of cinematic close-up. Second, the simplification of the two faces enhances and reinforces the sense of commonality between Dankichi and the native king: composed of various geometric figures, they appear in almost perfect symmetry, with the same eyes, nose, mouth, facial curvatures, and head, and even the same proportions and distribution of black and white. They are almost mirror images of one another.

In sum, this moment of erasure of racial difference depends on visual strategies that bring us very close to the image (close-up) and to the fundamentals of figuration (simplified geometrical composition), as a result of which we do not perceive difference between the native king and Dankichi. Rather we feel their fundamental commonality, which comes of sort of primordial simplicity and elasticity of the animated figure, a plasmaticity that implicates the transformative ability of animated characters to adopt the qualities and shapes of other entities and of other developmental moments (so-called primitive or childish stages).

WITH SPECIESISM, WE CAN NEVER BE ENTIRELY SURE WHAT A CERTAIN ANIMAL STANDS FOR—A RACE, A NATION, AN ETHNICITY, ALL OF THESE, OR NONE OF THESE.

In *Dankichi* the story concerns humans. Speciesism will introduce another twist to this plasmaticity, however. As speciesism translates racial difference into species difference, we lose fixed points of reference that commonly allow us to identify racism and racial stereotypes. In many respects, the scene of the native king and Dankichi bumping noses anticipates the operations of animation's speciesism. The native king in *Bōken Dankichi* is already so simplified and generalized that we cannot say with certainty what he represents in ethnic or racial terms, even though this is a racialized depiction. With speciesism, we can never be entirely sure what a certain animal stands for—a race, a nation, an ethnicity, all of these, or none of these. We know that it makes a difference yet we don't know what kind of difference it makes. We have a sense that racial distinctions are being made, and yet they are not racial distinctions exactly.

In sum, even in depictions of racial difference in animation, we see a tendency to make racial difference elastic, plastic, plasmatic. Speciesism extends this plasmaticity at the level of form to the level of referent. Animation's affection for animals entails an investment in a plasmaticity in which deformation and transformation take precedence over, and appears more fundamental than, representation and figuration. At the same time, iconicity

takes precedence over, and appears more fundamental than, referentiality. The important question becomes whether speciesism can truly move beyond racism by "plasmaticizing" it, or whether it merely holds racial difference under erasure in order to repeat it more effectively—continually displacing and renewing racism by simultaneously marking and erasing it.

NORAKURO

In its potential to depict the enemy as an animal species, wartime animation differs from Japanese wartime cinema or "national policy films" insofar as these latter tended to avoid depictions of Japan's enemies, particularly those involved in the war in China and those on other fronts and throughout the colonies. Because such scholars as Satō Tadao, Kyoko Hirano, and John Dower have stressed this tendency of Japanese war cinema to avoid depictions of the enemy, I feel that I can present it schematically here.[24] The emphasis in national policy films falls instead on the difficulties and sacrifices of the soldiers who carry on regardless of privations and who continue to embody youth and sincerity. We don't see who the enemy is, we don't know what the context for the war is, and even battles remain rather abstract, mostly a matter of an experience of the difficulties of war. War thus appears as an existential test site for purity, integrity, and sacrifice on the part of Japanese soldiers. To some extent, the erasure of the enemy makes sense in ideological terms. Because the Japanese war was presented in terms of liberation, it would surely not have been wise to crank out images of Japanese soldiers killing Chinese soldiers or murdering civilian populations (even though the murder of civilians gradually becomes the rule in modern warfare).

Again, Japan's wartime animation differs from its wartime cinema. Animation (and manga) seemed to enjoy a certain freedom in the presentation of war battles with the enemy. This is not to say that manga and animation offered direct representations of the enemy as a rule. Rather, because animation and manga so readily translate "races" (in the slippery sense of the term that comprises peoples, ethnic communities, and nations) into animals, something very different happens in Japan's wartime animation. Cartoons of Norakuro or "Stray Black" provide prime examples.

A cartoon character created by Tagawa Suihō and often described as a canine counterpart to Felix the Cat, Norakuro first appeared in print in *Shōnen kurabu* in 1931, the year in which the rigged Manchurian Incident gave the Japanese government its excuse to begin a full-scale invasion of, and war

against, China. Norakuro begins his adventures as an accident-prone soldier in a dog regiment under the command of Buru the Bulldog. The Stray Black dog enjoyed such popularity that the manga were soon adapted in animation, with some episodes adapted repeatedly. There are, for instance, two extant versions of Norakuro's first adventure in the army entitled *Norakuro nitōhei* (Norakuro, Private Second Class). Murata Yasuji directed a version in 1933,[25] and Seo Mitsuyo directed another in 1935.[26]

In Murata's version, Norakuro stands out from the other dogs in the dog regiment on the basis of his color (the other dogs are white), and he constantly stumbles and bumbles through his duties. In Figure 4, for instance, from Murata's version, as the line of dog soldiers smartly salute their commander, Norakuro throws both hands in the air in a moment of irrepressible enthusiasm.

Norakuro's unruly and lazy behavior is striking in comparison with the general insistence in national policy films on regimentation and synchronization of soldierly activities, which reached new aesthetic heights in films like *Hawai Maree oki kaisen* (1945, War at sea from Hawaii to Malaysia). In Seo's 1935 production of Norakuro as a private second class, Norakuro lazily sleeps on after the other soldiers are already at their calisthenics. Fortunately, Norakuro's bed comes to life, and when the bed is unable to awaken him, it runs him out to join the squad of soldiers.



FIGURE 4. In the 1933 version of his adventures as a private second class, Norakuro the Stray Black dog finds it difficult to stay in formation with the other dog soldiers.

Despite his lack of discipline and coordination, the Stray Black shows unusual spirit on the battlefield—he runs headlong to face the enemy when other dogs of the regiment hesitate. He also has dumb luck in spades, and frequently produces a victory through some sort of ruse. As a result of his spirit, ingenuity, and good fortune, Norakuro leads the dog regiment to victory after victory against its enemies. With each victory, Norakuro rises in rank, and consequently there are a series of animated shorts based on the manga episodes that track Norakuro's climb through the military ranks. The episodes begin with "private second class" (*Norakuro nitōhei*), and Stray Black gradually rises

from "private first class" (*Norakuro ittōhei*)[27] to "corporal" (*Norakuro gochō*)[28] and "minor company officer" (*Norakuro shōjō*).[29] Because Norakuro made his appearance in 1931 at the start of Japan's war against China, his rise through the ranks corresponds with Japan's movement deeper and deeper into its "Asian" war. Needless to say, Norakuro's good fortunes stand in stark contrast with Japan's wartime fortunes.

Now, Norakuro and the dogs are clearly Japanese. In *Norakuro gochō* (1934, Corporal Norakuro), for instance, Japanese flags stand at the gate to the dogs' military encampment. But what do the animal enemies stand for? In Seo Mitsuyo's 1935 version of *Norakuro nitōhei,* for instance, the dog regiment encounters a ferocious tiger. Does the tiger stand for a specific foe? Because national animal heraldry retained some importance in the 1930s, and because Korea commonly designated itself as a tiger, it is tempting to construe Norakuro's battle against the tiger in terms of national allegory: dog versus tiger is Japan versus Korea. Such a reading certainly proves interesting. In Seo's film, Norakuro accidentally paints himself with tiger stripes and confronts the adult tiger as if he were a cub of the same species (Figure 5).

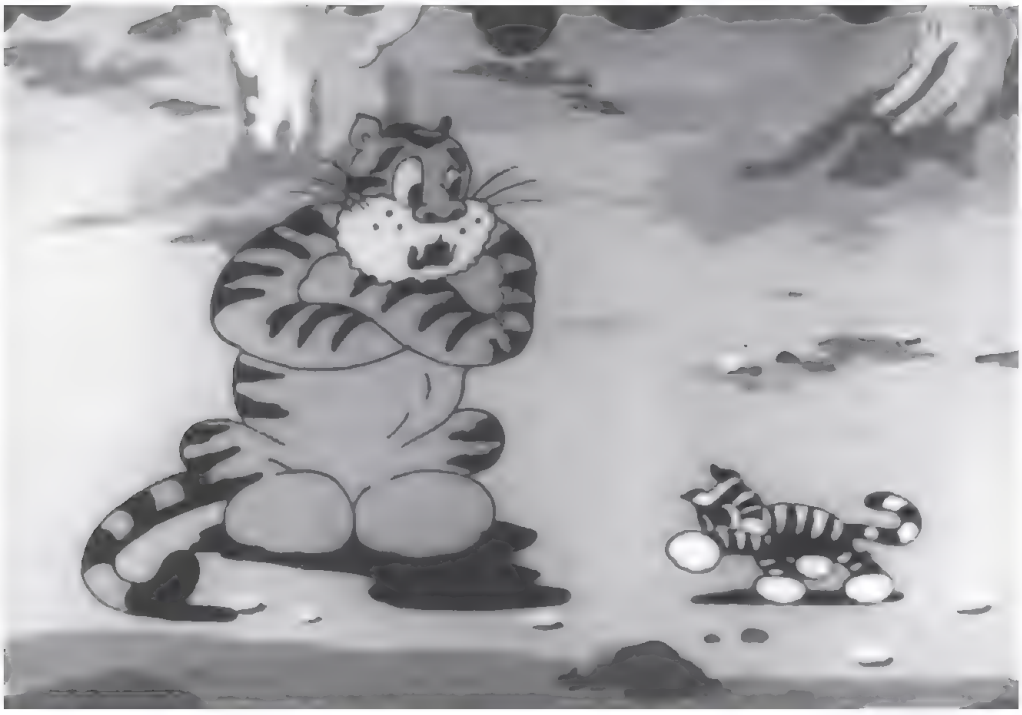


FIGURE 5. In the 1935 version of Norakuro's adventures as private second class, Norakuro fortuitously develops stripes and approaches the enemy tiger disguised as a tiger cub.

IS SPECIESISM FATED TO DISPLACE RACISM (TO ERASE, REINSCRIBE, AND RENEW IT), OR CAN IT PRODUCE SOMETHING ENTIRELY NEW, SOMETHING BEYOND RACIAL THOUGHT?

Norakuro's little tiger disguise allows him to immobilize the larger tiger (among other things, his proximity allows him to toss laughing gas down the tiger's throat), and in the end, the Japanese dog regiment cages and merrily drags off the tiger. Read allegorically, the Japanese dog in Seo's *Norakuro Nitōhei* who acts as a friendly little benefactor of the same species in order to cage the tiger and drag it home is evocative of the dupery and force involved in Japan's mass exportation of Korean labor into Japanese factories during the war, and also recalls the "recruitment" of "comfort women" (Korean women were especially numerous among the women drafted by the Japanese army, by force or by ruse, into military sexual slavery).[30]

Similarly, other animals in the Norakuro series can be read as allegorical representations of Japan's colonized peoples and enemies. The pigs, for instance, are usually read as Chinese, and there is cause to do so.[31] But there are many possible readings for the gorillas or apes in *Norakuro ittōhei* (who are frightened into submission by a jack-in-the-box tiger head) or monkeys in *Norakuro gochō* (who are apparently proving difficult to assimilate into the dog army).[32] In other words, it is difficult and probably impossible to sustain an allegorical reading based on a one-to-one correspondence between an animal species and a people or nation. Something strange happens with speciesism in general. Something strange happens when races, nationalities, or ethnicities are translated into nonhuman animal species.

As remarked above, speciesism entails a plastic or elastic relation to racism. Even though we know very well that racial differences are at work, we cannot say for certain which peoples or which racial relations are in play. This is a general property of speciesism: we may say that the pigs in the Norakuro series are Chinese and the dogs Japanese; we may wonder about Bernard Weber's analogies between ant societies and Indian or Japanese social structures in his novel *Les fourmis* (1991, Ants);[33] the "domestic beast-people" or "human cattle" called "Yapoo" in Numa Shōzō's novels are Japanese who have been biologically engineered to fulfill a variety of domestic functions, but with the transformation of Japanese in Yapoo, we might well ask whether "Japanese" is not now a species rather than a people or nation;[34] we may feel that the humanoid alien in Wolfgang Peterson's film *Enemy Mine* (1985) is somehow Japanese, especially if we note its similarity to John Boorman's *Hell in the Pacific* (1968); and we may read the concern for human–alien relations in Octavia Butler's Xenogenesis series as a displacement of contemporary American racism against

African Americans[35]—and yet, in all these instances, the exact racial reference has been rendered fluid, at once evoking a familiar mode of discrimination and conjuring up a different world of experience. This is a relatively common trope in science fiction, as these examples suggest. Some mode of racial discrimination is displaced onto a relation between different species, and frequently between humans and humanoid aliens. Speciesism allows for the exploration and maybe resolution of racial discrimination, with outcomes ranging from pious moral treacle to perverse scenarios of mutual bondage or shared guilt.

Speciesism introduces uncertainty about the boundary between races and species. With humanoid aliens, we are already on slippery grounds. We cannot always be sure whether humanoid aliens constitute another species or another race or people: in *Star Trek,* for instance, Klingons or Vulcans may appear to constitute another species, but then, because humans marry and bear offspring with Klingons and Vulcans, these aliens turn out to be more like races (in the course of the series we may alternately think of Klingons as Russians, as African Americans, or as some other people, nation, or race). The appellation "humanoid" glosses over the difficulty in ascertaining what the relations between humans and humanoids really are—different races or different species? The idea of humanoid aliens constructs a zone of indiscernibility between race and species. With relations that are between human animals and nonhuman animals, we may assume an even greater gap or a greater degree of referential plasmaticity; humans and animals don't usually marry and bear children together. Of course, because speciesism is a translation of race and racism, we can't rule out the possibility either. And the prior question arises again. Is speciesism fated to displace racism (to erase, reinscribe, and renew it), or can it produce something entirely new, something beyond racial thought?

Such a question can only be entertained in specific contexts, with specific materials. In effect, speciesism in Japanese wartime animation constituted a powerful attempt to move beyond (Western) racism, a concerted effort to imagine the multinational or multiethnic world proposed in pan-Asianist thinking. In the Norakuro animated films, the translation of the military conflicts of national empire into interspecies warfare produces a paradoxical situation in which racism is at once challenged and embraced. On the one hand, the Norakuro series introduces an insuperable divide between friend and enemy. War is no longer a matter of humans fighting humans but of one species (dogs) fighting other species (tigers, monkeys, apes, pigs). But does the Norakuro series thus take racism to a new extreme wherein the enemy is no longer of the same species? What peace can be hoped for between dogs and tigers? While enemies are not imagined as racial others, neither are they entirely human.

On the other hand, the Norakuro films depict friend and foe as humanoid animals, or precisely, as animalized humans. Animals on both sides appear cute, playful, childlike, elastic, and plastic. Instead of humanism then, this sort of animation develops an "animalism" mingled with animism, vitalism, and what might be called "childism." There is a turn to "earlier" phases of development in terms of ontogeny and phylogeny, to a primordial youthful vitality, a wellspring of life, of animality—plasmaticity.

The beauty of such animated plasmaticity in ideological terms is that it decisively separates different communities (evoking fundamental biological differences between species—dogs, pigs, apes, and so forth) while linking the same communities to one another at a level different from that of traditional humanism. While animals in the Norakuro series may fight, their conflict is not that of social Darwinism (survival of the fittest), whose racial implications Japanese imperial ideologies strove to resist (namely the implication that whites are the fittest race because their imperial strength is greater).

If the Norakuro series successfully avoids the racism implicit in the American bestialization of the Japanese foe, its manner of speciesism does not entirely break with racism and racialization, despite its challenge to the racial imaginary. Its animated animals thus come to embody the paradoxical stance underlying the Japanese war of racial liberation: races are simultaneously delineated and "liberated" (allowed free reign to swarm), simultaneously projected and overcome. Animation's love affair with animals paves the way for rendering pan-Asianism in the form of pan-speciesism—a sphere of coprosperity that takes the form of the cooperation of animal species (in such ecosystems as jungle, savannah, woodlands, and coral reef) who cooperate despite, and paradoxically because of, their innate irreconcilable differences.

It should give us pause that the state of war itself is necessary for the work of cooperation and coprosperity, while the vital plasmaticity of animation promises to underwrite the transformation of races into species primarily through modalities of cuteness and play. This cooperation and coprosperity is predicated on, and only sustainable through, the perpetuation of war among ever-younger generations.

The Japanese wartime version of speciesism—the wartime attempt to get out of racism through animal cooperation—will haunt the racial imaginary of postwar Japan, and it is Tezuka Osamu's works in particular that strive to take up and transform wartime speciesism into an ethics of nurture of the nonhuman in a cosmopolitan era.[36] Understanding the prewar–postwar transformation of speciesism, however, demands some account of the legacy of folklore in animation, as with the modern invention of the Momotarō tradition that

happened between folklore studies and animation. Thus we might begin to take seriously the idea that "cute is what remains of Japanese empire" and demand that speciesism in our films and fictions live up to its promise to imagine other worlds of difference rather than assuage our racial anxieties.

Notes

1. John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 4.

2. Ibid., 81.

3. Ibid., 84.

4. Ibid., 13.

5. While the preference in animal studies is to refer consistently to humans as human animals (and to animals as nonhuman animals) in order to stress that humans are indeed animals, I sometimes use the shorthand terms *humans* and *animals* but with the understanding (and hope) that my intermittent use of human animals and nonhuman animals (in conjunction with my general argument) provides ample indication that I do not separate humans and animals.

6. Richard Ryder coined the term in the early 1970s to refer to prejudices toward nonhuman animals, and animal advocates have picked up the term with this general connotation. While Ryder and subsequent writers see speciesism as akin to racism and sexism, I shift and expand the definition of speciesism in order to indicate that speciesism is often intimately connected with racism.

7. Some would argue that *Homo sapiens* is unusual as a species because, having killed off all other species of the genus, human is de facto a genus and a species. In any event, it is beyond the scope of this article to explore the many questions that arise in classification of species (which frequently breaks down). What is important here is the history of racial thought in which the problem of racial difference was imagined in terms of species difference, and one of the central questions of the late nineteenth century became, Can different races interbreed? The answer is of course yes, but many racial thinkers insisted that such hybridity would weaken the species, while others suggested that hybridity would improve the human stock. Such questions, which are discussed more fully in Part Two of this essay, are outlined nicely in Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995). Interestingly enough, upon the transmission of Gobineau's ideas about race and the "yellow peril" into Japan, thinkers such as Mori Ōgai not only challenged such thinking but also showed it to be scientifically spurious.

8. Dower, *War without Mercy*, 11.

9. Seo Mitsuyo, dir., *Momotarō: Umi no shinpei* (Momotarō's divine army) (Shōchiku hōmu bideo, n.d.).

10. Dower, *War without Mercy*, 255.

11. Étienne Balibar, in the chapter "Racism and Nationalism," in *Race, Nation, and Class: Ambiguous Identities*, by Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (London: Verso, 1991), speaks to the problematic that runs throughout this essay. To summarize his

account very simply, humanism, like racism, is a supplement to nationalism, but humanism promises a supernationalism that will overcome the racial supplementation of nationalism. Balibar argues persuasively that humanism and racism are closely related, and in fact, humanism frequently operates as a form of whiteness. Needless to say, Pan-Asianism implies a logic analogous to humanism.

12. Dower, *War without Mercy,* 248.

13. In an earlier version of the work that became *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Others* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm, 2003), an essay entitled "Cyborgs to Companion Species: Reconfiguring Kinship in Technoscience" (in *Chasing Technoscience: Matrix for Materiality,* ed. Don Ihde and Evan Selinger [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003]), Donna Haraway begins with the provocative thesis that "I have come to see cyborgs as junior siblings in the much bigger, queer family of companion species." Yet, even though she refers to sites of potential overlap between companion species and imperialism (for instance, settlers' dogs in Israel's conquered territories displacing local wild types), she glosses over questions of power implied in companion-species formations. In this respect, while I borrow her term and owe a great deal to her discussion, I tend to insist on the power dynamics implicit in specific formations of companion species and not simply within the technoscientific formulation of companion animals.

14. Dower, *War without Mercy,* 13.

15. Naoki Sakai, in his discussion of Kyoto School philosopher Tanabe Hajime, provides a concise and persuasive account of this problem. See "Subject and Substratum: On Japanese Imperial Nationalism," *Cultural Studies* 14, no. 3/4 (2000): 462–530.

16. Part two will be published in *Mechademia 4.*

17. Sergei Eisenstein, *Eisenstein on Disney,* ed. Jay Leyda, trans. Alan Upchurch (London: Methuen, 1988). Eisenstein favors the term plasmaticness because 'here we have a being represented in drawing, a being of definite form, a being which has attained a definite appearance, and which behaves like the primal protoplasm, not yet possessing a 'stable form, but capable of assuming any form and which skipping along the rungs of the evolutionary ladder, attaches itself to any and all forms of animal existence' (21).

18. Jonathan Burt, *Animals in Film* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), 163.

19. Akira Mizuta Lippit, *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

20. Not surprisingly, the adventures of Songokû the Monkey from *The Journey to the West* figure among the earliest extant animated films.

21. In this volume Sharalyn Orbaugh discusses some of the ways affect challenges conventional boundaries of the subject. I would add in this context that the prolongation of affect results in something like a body, a sensorimotor schema that is temporally sustainable. Here arises a politics of "bare life" or "naked life."

22. See David Gernstein's "Cartoon Pop Music Page" for Africans in Disney's *Trader Mickey*: http://www.cartoonresearch.com/gerstein/cartoonmusic (accessed February 22, 2007).

23. *Bōken Dankichi—Hyōryû no kan* (The adventurous Dankichi: Adrift), original manga by Shima Keizō, in *Shōwa manga eiga daikōshin,* 5 VHS tapes (Victor Entertainment, 1993), vol. 1, title 2.

24. See, for instance, Tadao Sato's chapter, "Japanese War Films," trans. Gregory

Burnett, in *Currents in Japanese Cinema* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1982); Kyoko Hirano's chapter, "From War to Occupation," in *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 1992), and John Dower's chapter, "Japanese Cinema Goes to War," in *Japan in War and Peace* (New York: New Press, 1993). Two fairly recent edited collections have considerably complicated some of the prior insistence on the absence of representation of Japan's others in Japan's national policy cinema, opening the history of Japan's imperial film production and distribution: see especially Iwamoto Kenji's introduction to his edited volume, *Nihon eiga to nashonarizumu 1931–1945* (Tokyo: Shinwasha, 2004); and An Ni's essay, "Daitōa eiga e no kaidan: 'Tairiku eiga' shiron," in another volume edited by Iwamoto Kenji, *Eiga to "Daitōa kyōeiken"* (Tokyo: Shinwasha, 2004).

25. Murata Yasuji, manga and direction, *Norakuro nitōhei,* in *Shōwa manga eiga daikōshin,* vol. 1, title 1.

26. Seo Mitsuyo, dir., *Norakuro nitōhei,* in *Nihon aato animeeshon eiga senshû,* 12 DVDs (Kinokuniya Company, 2004), vol. 3, title 3.

27. Seo Mitsuyo, dir., *Norakuro ittōhei,* in *Nihon aato animeeshon eiga senshû,* vol. 3, title 4.

28. Murata Yasuji, *Norakuro gochō,* in *Shōwa manga eiga daikōshin,* vol. 2, title 1.

29. Murata Yasuji, *Norakuro shōjō—nichiyōbi no kaijiken,* in *Shōwa manga eiga daikōshin,* vol. 2, title 2.

30. For an introduction of the "comfort women" and the debates on history surrounding their testimony, see *True Stories of the Korean Comfort Women,* ed. Keith Howard (London: Cassell, 1995) and Hyunah Yang, "Revisiting the Issue of Korean 'Military Comfort Women': The Question of Truth and Positionality," in *The Comfort Women: Colonialism, War, and Sex,* ed. Elaine H. Kim (Durham, N.C..: Duke University Press, 1997), 51–72.

31. Akiyama Masami makes this point in a presentation and commentary on the manga of Norakuro's dog regiment versus the pigs in *Maboroshi no sensō manga no sekai* (Tokyo: Natsume shobō, 1998), 31–46.

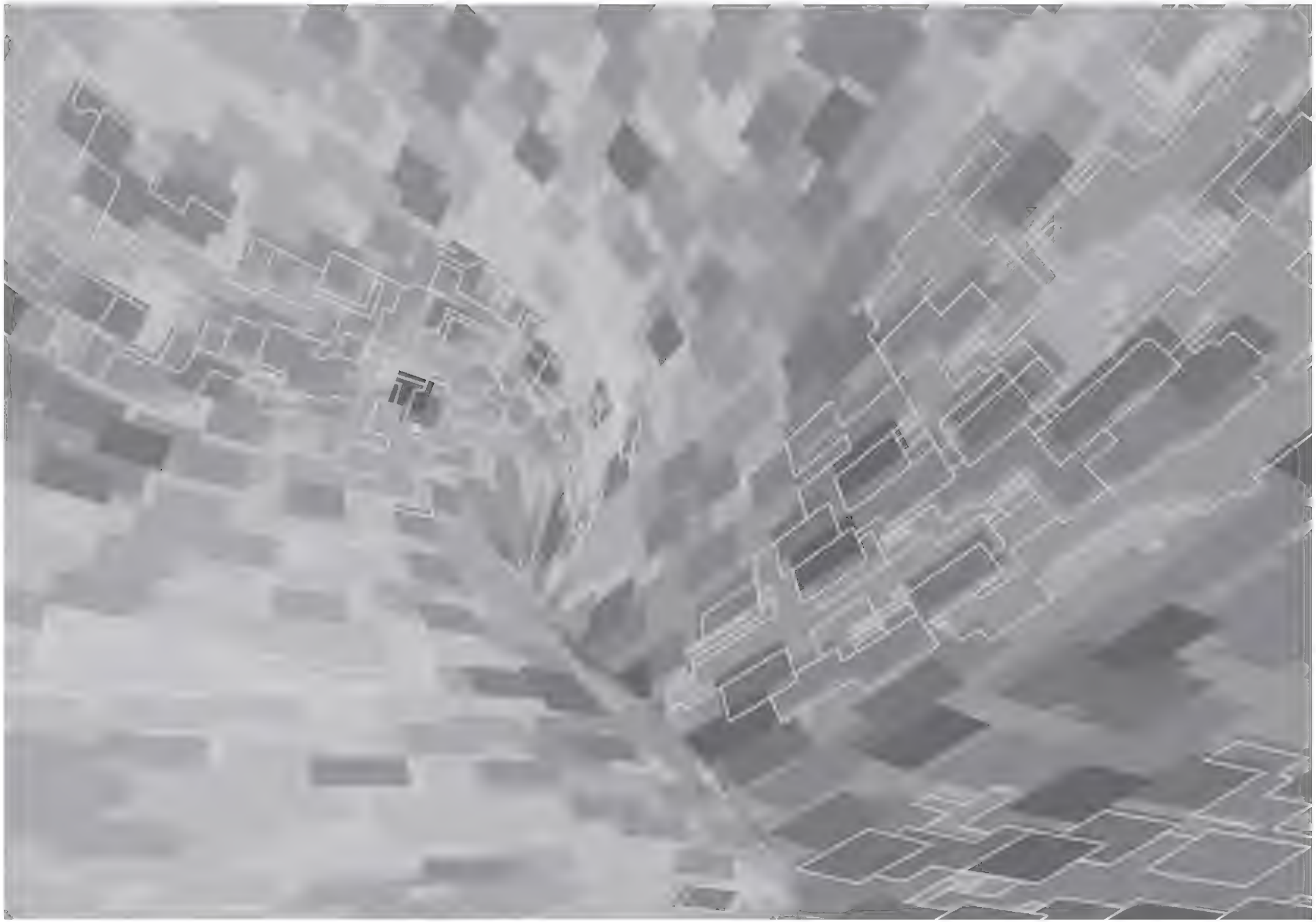
32. Note that, in Japanese, dogs and monkeys are considered natural enemies, and instead of "like cat and dog," in Japanese one says "like dog and monkey."

33. Bernard Weber, *Les fourmis* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1991). There would be two additional books in the trilogy, *Jour des fourmis* (1992) and *La révolution des fourmis* (1995).

34. In the final revised version of Numa Shōzō's *Kachikujin Yapuu* comprises five volumes (Tokyo: Gentōsha, 1999). There are also two important manga versions: Ishinomori Shōtarō's (1970) and Egawa Tatsuya's (2004). Takayuki Tatsumi, in *Full Metal Apache: Transactions between Cyberpunk Japan and Avant-Pop America* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006), gives a nice introduction to the Yapoo as *kachikujin* or "domestic animal-people," which he renders as "human cattle" (54–59).

35. There are three books in the Xenogenesis trilogy: *Dawn* (1987), *Adulthood Rites* (1988), and *Imago* (1989), reprinted together in the omnibus edition *Xenogenisis* (New York: Doubleday, 1989).

36. I will take up this question in part two to be published later; see, too, Yomota Inuhiko's essay on Tezuka in this volume.



YOMOTA INUHIKO

Translated and Introduced by Hajime Nakatani

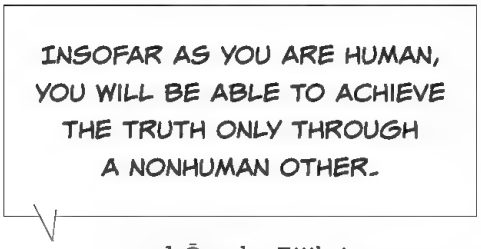
Stigmata in Tezuka Osamu's Works

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

A prominent and prolific scholar, Yomota Inuhiko is the author of more than a dozen books of cultural criticism. Best known for his nuanced and theoretically ambitious writings on film history and criticism, Yomota is also the author of a number of books and essays devoted to manga, including *Manga genron* (1994, The principles of manga), a seminal study of the semiotic structures of the medium that brought manga studies to a new level of critical awareness.[1] This now-classic study deftly weaves rigorous analysis of semiotic structures with close attention to the texture and nuance of individual works. The same combination of theoretical rigor and sensitivity to detail is already evident in the translated essay, one of the first to apply methods of literary criticism to the analysis of manga.

Tezuka Osamu, the central subject of the essay, is considered by many the father of postwar manga and one of the most influential cultural figures in postwar Japan. While a certain amount of hyperbole and retrospective myth making inevitably enters such glorification of a single author, it is fair to say that Tezuka single-handedly defined the parameters of what we

now consider manga and, moreover, was largely responsible—both as author and as spokesman—for lending this popular medium the visibility and cultural cachet it now enjoys in Japan. Because of this privileged position in postwar manga, Tezuka's oeuvre is often regarded as the touchstone of manga criticism and theory. Indeed many of the landmark studies of manga in recent years have focused on Tezuka, including Natsume Fusanosuke and Ōtsuka Eiji's important monographs. (A translation of a chapter from Ōtsuka's volume appears in this volume.)



Tezuka's life-long preoccupation with the fraught relationship between humanity and its others (robots, cyborgs, animals, monsters)—discussed here with impressive clarity and insight—has since grown into something akin to the medium's obsession, epitomized in some of the landmark works of postwar manga history (e.g. Ōtomo Katsuhiro's *Akira* and Iwaaki Hitoshi's *Parasyte* among the more recent examples). Originally derived from Disney animations and science fiction literature, both major sources of Tezuka's inspiration, the theme was given a distinctive twist by Tezuka and later manga authors who have intensified the underlying ambiguity and precariousness of the human–other divide with increasing sophistication and poignancy. The formative period of this distinctive thematic complex is the subject of the following essay.

PROLOGUE

You, speaker who are about to seize the word—how will you prove that you are human? As you have probably noticed, there are some nonhumans among us. At first sight, everyone may appear to be human. But if all around you are indeed human, it automatically falls on you to assume the role of the nonhuman against whom others can assert their own humanity. Whether you are human or not unfortunately remains unknown even to yourself. If you nonetheless wish to be human, it is incumbent on you to actively place yourself amid those others and to recognize them as human. Now, you are probably not the only one who's preoccupied with all this. All those others you consider human are in fact thinking the same thing. That's why there is no other way than for all to stick together and to recognize each other, for only thus can you proclaim yourself to be human. You do so, however, not as a plain statement of conviction but as a gamble, one taken against the lethal

threat that those very others you recognized as human may come back to claim that you are the nonhuman one.

You cannot construct your truth in complete isolation. Insofar as you are human, you will be able to achieve the truth only through a nonhuman other. It is only by excluding this other that you can achieve your own humanity.

SIMULACRUM OF THE HUMAN

Tezuka Osamu's *Ambassador Atom* (*Atomu taishi*), published in the magazine *Shōnen* in 1951, featured the first appearance of a robot named Atom, thereby inaugurating the famous *Astro Boy* (1952–68, *Tetsuwan Atomu*) series that continued for more than ten years.[2] It is thus all the more interesting that the initial piece gives a completely different impression from that of the subsequent series. In *Ambassador Atom,* Atom is not the detached and superhuman arbiter of human evil that he will later become in the series; nor does he engage in spectacular combats with other robots. In the inaugural piece, Atom's narrative role remains largely underdeveloped. He does not yet enjoy the company of robot siblings and parents, and is indeed portrayed as the only robot advanced enough to communicate with humans. Thus the theme of competition and conflict between humans and robots—the driving theme of the *Astro Boy* series in its various permutations—has not yet crystallized in *Ambassador Atom.* In fact, Atom is not even the central protagonist of the story but just one of its many secondary characters.

Some of these discrepancies may perhaps be attributed to the fact that *Ambassador Atom* was originally conceived as a stand-alone piece (which, if the original Japanese title had been translated into English, would have carried a subtitle "The Travellers") and was recast into the series only retroactively, in response to the positive reception of the original piece. But that is not all. The rupture between *Ambassador Atom* and *Astro Boy* has more fundamental implications for our understanding of the series as a whole. I suggest that *Ambassador Atom* may be viewed as a preliminary narrative operation that enables the subsequent integration of Atom into the codes of human order. Rather than advancing a narrative framework for the subsequent *Astro Boy* series to adhere to, it remains very much a stand-alone piece; and if it does serve to ground the subsequent series, it does so from outside of the narrative universe of the series as such. In other words, *Ambassador Atom* deploys the primary processes whereby the opposition between humans and robots first takes shape, the fundamental opposition that the *Astro Boy* series will subsequently reiterate ad nauseum (Figure 1).



『アトム大使』。人間はロボットを排除することで、
はじめて人間に到達する。

FIGURE 1. *Ambassador Atom*. Humans achieve their human identity through the exclusion of robots. Copyright Tezuka Productions.

First, a synopsis of *Ambassador Atom* is in order:

Extraterrestrials who have wandered across the universe for two thousand years since the explosion of their home planet accidentally discover the Earth and land in the Japanese mountains of Chichibu. These extraterrestrials are not only humanoid in general appearance but each individual corresponds to a human individual so closely that they can hardly be told apart. A young male extraterrestrial Tamao surreptitiously leaves the starship and heads to Tokyo, where he is soon kidnapped by humans who sell him off to a circus in the seedy entertainment district of Shinjuku. The ringmaster is planning a stage showdown between humans and robots, and the young extraterrestrial is cast in the role of the human. In the robot's role is Atom, a hi-tech humanoid that the mad scientist Doctor Tenma has created to replace his beloved son, tragically killed in a car accident. However, in a Pinocchio-like tragicomedy, it turns out that Atom's body does not grow, and the furious doctor dumps Atom, selling him to the troupe at a nominal price. On the day of the show, the young extraterrestrial sees among the audience a boy and his father who look just like himself and his own father. In the mayhem

that ensues, Tamao flees the circus. The next day, the two Tamaos appear at the same school, leading to more confusion. Through the extraterrestrial Tamao, humans learn of the existence of the other humanoid race and of the virtually identical lives that the two humanities lead.

The extraterrestrials decide to leave the spaceship behind to live among humans. But the honeymoon between the two humanities is short lived. The extraterrestrials are gradually introduced to deplorable human habits, notably the consumption of living creatures. The outcome is a critical shortage of food on a planetary scale, and human-led riots break out. Doctor Tenma takes control of the secret police and launches an anti-extraterrestrial campaign using his new chemical weapon that causes cells to shrink. The enraged extraterrestrials rush back to the spaceship to launch a retaliatory attack on Tokyo. The only one who can mediate this conflict is Atom, being neither human nor extraterrestrial. Atom negotiates the terms for peace with the extraterrestrials and leaves his head as ransom. In the meantime, Doctor Tenma dies from the effects of his own chemical weapon. Thereafter, the two humanities finally reconcile. The extraterrestrials return Atom's head to him and happily take off to Venus, their new home.

HUMANS CAN ACHIEVE THEIR OWN HUMANITY ONLY THROUGH THE EXCLUSION OF EXTRATERRESTRIALS.

Extraterrestrials who arrive from a planet exactly replicating the Earth, who lead a social life virtually identical to that of humans, and who can barely be distinguished from their human counterparts even on an individual basis—this is a particularly radical embodiment of the figure of otherness that Tezuka tirelessly deployed in his life-long and single-minded pursuit of the theme of encounters with the nonhuman—e.g., the man-beast in *The Vampires* (1966–67, *Banpaiya*), the bird-man in *The Adventure of Rock* (1952–54, *Rokku bōkenki*), and the countless robots). And this infinite proximity between humans and extraterrestrials in *Ambassador Atom* is what propels the humans' persistent discrimination and exclusion of extraterrestrials, in their struggle to maintain terrestrial order and to confirm their human identity. To put it more succinctly, what the narrative suggests is this: humans can achieve their own humanity only through the exclusion of extraterrestrials.

What then differentiates humans and extraterrestrials? A seemingly small but nonetheless fundamental difference separates the two. While humans are carnivorous and engage in hunting, extraterrestrials are able to extract atmospheric compounds to synthesize their nutrition; and since their existence is not predicated on the sacrifice of other species, there is no guilt

attached to the progress of civilization; progress is pure good. Thus, freed from the necessary evil of the struggle for survival that continues to burden humans, the extraterrestrials can afford to maintain an inner kernel of innocence in spite of their technological advances. (Note also that there is no suggestion in the story that their accidental arrival on Earth was in any way an act of aggression.) It is against the backdrop of this peaceful innocence that human evil is highlighted, a contrast brought forth with particular poignancy first in the introduction of the docile extraterrestrials to carnivorous habits (which inserts them into the terrestrial food chain), and next in the mass extermination of extraterrestrials perpetrated by humans. But aside from such differences at the level of narrative content, there is another way in which humans and extraterrestrials can be clearly distinguished: the extraterrestrials have huge ears—much larger than their human counterparts. None of the characters in the story make explicit mention of this distinguishing mark, which is thus relegated to the purely visual register of the narrative, but it nonetheless assists both the readers and the characters in the story—notably the secret police—in their efforts to discriminate extraterrestrials from humans.

ATOM'S WELL-NIGH COMPLETE FAILURE TO FULFILL HIS CREATOR'S INTENTIONS IS PRECISELY WHAT ENABLES HIM TO EMERGE AS THE PRIVILEGED CRITIC OF HUMAN EVIL.

Atom's mode of existence is conditioned in many ways by those subtle differences separating the two humanities. At the same time, his existence as such constitutes another, and perhaps more decisive register of differences. While the human Doctor Tenma is propelled by the death of his beloved son to fabricate a double, the extraterrestrial Doctor Tenma is not. Lacking a notion of copy, the extraterrestrial one develops in its stead a chemical weapon that reduces life literally to nothing. This difference is crucial to the unfolding of the conflict between humans and extraterrestrials that eventuates in the penultimate massacre of the latter, since the tragedy to follow is inaugurated by the two scientists' struggle over the unique and indivisible Atom.

How is Atom positioned in this conflict? As a creation of the demonic mad scientist, he necessarily maintains a certain proximity to human evil even though he does not take part in it. In fact, Atom's well-nigh complete failure to fulfill his creator's intentions—to be a perfect copy of man, a growing organism that is an integral part of the food chain and of the struggle for survival—is precisely what enables him to emerge as the privileged critic of human evil. Moreover, his uncertain status suspended between humans

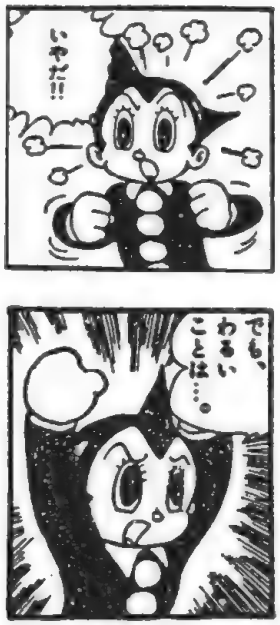
and nonhumans brings him closer to the extraterrestrials. The black horns displayed prominently on Atom's head are indeed no other than the transference of the giant ears that mark the extraterrestrials. Thus, Atom constitutes the unique and privileged point of intersection between humans and nonhumans, and the two Doctor Tenmas' struggle over Atom is hence the logical consequence of his ambiguous belonging.

The ending of *Ambassador Atom* is quite ambiguous. Or, more precisely, Tezuka imposes a forced closure on the story without bringing its many contradictions to a satisfactory resolution. In his effort to bring peace to humans and extraterrestrials alike, Atom persuades the two parties to agree to a somewhat idealistic proposal, that each group have one half of its population remain on Earth and the other half emigrate to Mars. Yet, it is not clear, at the end of the story, how this proposal is brought to fruition. In fact, the contradictions on the human side are brought to an abrupt end through the scapegoat-like death of Doctor Tenma, and the extraterrestrials take off happily for Venus, not Mars. This should not be dismissed as a mere oversight on the part of the author. *Ambassador Atom* concludes by expelling the extraterrestrials from Earth rather than enacting a well-crafted peace treaty, and this should be understood as a symptom of Tezuka's failure to truly envision a peaceful coexistence between the two humanities according to Atom's ideals. It may not be a simple coincidence that the San Francisco Peace Treaty was signed around the time of the publication of *Ambassador Atom.*[3] But to stay close to the work itself, it should be stressed that this failed closure of the original story was what opened the possibility for the later Atom series.

The human experience of otherness in *Ambassador Atom* is reminiscent of what Jacques Lacan called the mirror stage.[4] Humans encounter their own mirror image in the extraterrestrials. And by recognizing these likenesses of themselves as nonhuman and thereby expelling them from human order, humans succeed in shaping and consolidating their human self. As Lacan suggested, humans can attain Truth only through the presence and exclusion of an other. But how can one carry out this difficult task? This is where Atom comes in. Atom's role is to recognize humans as humans and to designate them as such. Himself situated on the threshold between humans and others, he functions as the catalyst that helps humans (re)gain their identity. Nonetheless, when after his self-sacrificing dedication to humans Atom finally begins to claim his own humanity, he is himself cruelly expelled from the category of the human. The resulting sense of loss on Atom's part can only be compensated for by his continual struggles against the countless nonhuman beings that are tirelessly summoned into the universe of the *Astro*

Boy series—the Gas Men, dinosaurs, Lightning Men, and Martians. In other words, Atom's experience in *Ambassador Atom* constitutes a trauma that will continue to haunt him thereafter, and, consequently, the *Astro Boy* series is no less than the pathography of Atom's compulsive repetition.

EAR AND TAIL



アトムの角は本当はどのような位置にあるのか。何を意味しているのか。

FIGURE 2. How are Atom's horns actually positioned? What do they mean? Copyright Tezuka Productions.

Such a narrative structure evidently did not emerge all at once. Atom's archetype can indeed be traced back to Tezuka's earlier works. Incidentally, to trace the genealogy of Atom is also to trace the genealogy of Atom's two horns. What after all is the use of those two black protrusions, those curious horns that never overlap regardless of where they are seen from (Figure 2)? Given that many robots in *Astro Boy* look exactly like human beings, those distinguishing horns no doubt reveal something essential about Atom's identity.

Lost World (1948, *Rosuto waarudo*) and *The Mysterious Underground Man* (1948, *Chiteikoku no kaijin*) are instructive in this regard. Both were published in 1948 and feature a rabbit endowed by the latest technology with human intelligence and emotion. Although the rabbit in both works is only a secondary character accompanying the central pair of Hige-Oyaji and Ken'ichi, he nonetheless dies a tragic death in the service of humans. *Lost World*'s rabbit character Mii-chan's rocket crashes into the Earth on his return from the exploration of planet Mamango; Big-Ears in *The Mysterious Underground Man* persists in disguising his identity to avoid ridicule and persecution, only to perish in a fire while continuing to believe in his own humanity. One may also add to this genealogy Sayoko of *The Moony Man* (1948, *Gessekai shinshi*), as this creature from the moon also meets a tragic end: having inadvertently revealed her rabbit-like face to her terrestrial lover, she commits suicide by jumping out of a rocket on its way back to Earth.

What distinguishes all those unfortunate side characters is their large ears (Figure 3). While their peculiar features are explained within the respective narrative universes by the fact that the characters are either a mutated rabbit or a creature

from the moon, the more profound significance of the ears is that they function as stigmata. The large ears are the mark of destiny, their bearer bound to serve humans unto death. At the same time, enlarged ears somehow signify high intelligence and thus connote scientific progress (understood positively). Both Mii-chan and Big-Ears are indeed endowed with an idealized high intelligence that exceeds that of ordinary humans, and the moon people's science is far beyond the science of their human counterparts. The genealogy of the rabbit-like superhumans begins with those earlier works and extends into Tezuka's later career, as in the case of Bocco of *Amazing Three* (1965–66, *Wandaa surii*) and Cleopatra of *Astro Boy: The Secret of the Egyptian Conspirators* (1959, *Tetsuwan Atomu: Ejiputo inbōdan no himitsu*).

It is not difficult to see how *Lost World* and *The Mysterious Underground Man* foreshadow *Ambassador Atom.* For example, Planet Mamango in *Lost World,* Earth's twin planet, returns after five million years of separation from Earth; thus, although uninhabited, the planet nonetheless poses a threat to the spatial identity of humanity, a threat culminating in the abandonment of the human simulacrum Ayame on Mamango. The echoes of *Ambassador Atom* are unmistakable. Likewise, *The Mysterious Underground Man* features the Underground People, ancient occupants of Earth whose ambition is to conquer the surface of the planet. Those threats are dispelled through the heroic deeds of the superhuman rabbits, just as Atom would later accomplish the same thing through his superhuman actions. It is thus evident that the rabbit characters are indeed Atom's precursors, and Atom's black horns the traces of his rabbit ancestry. Owing to their stigmata of horns or ears, Atom and his rabbit ancestors alike are both positioned at the liminal margin between humans and nonhumans, and contribute to the renaming of humanity in the brave new world of scientific progress.



アトムの二本の角の前身である長い耳。上から『地底国の怪人』『ロストワールド』『月世界紳士』。

FIGURE 3. Long-eared precursors to Atom. From *The Mysterious Underground Man* (top), *Lost World* (middle), and *The Moony Man* (bottom). Copyright Tezuka Productions.

It is interesting to observe in passing that, while the nose is another oft-exaggerated feature in Tezuka's works, it has far less significance than the ear, evoking little beyond the narrow sign-functions assigned to it by the author. From Doctor Ochanomizu in *Astro Boy* to the learned Sarutahiko in *The Phoenix* (1954–88, *Hi no tori*), the large nose merely indexes the stock character

of the lone intellectual burdened by a solitary knowledge, and does not serve to complicate the broader narrative of humanity and its self-identification. Unlike the ears, it only serves as a straightforward allegorical sign, not as the symptom of an essential difference.

There is, however, another genealogy of stigmata besides the ear-horn that should not be overlooked. It is the genealogy of the tailed characters, one that begins with such works as *Man of a Tail* (1949, *Yūbijin*) and *Jungle Emperor Leo* (1950–54, *Janguru taitei*), typically set in the jungle, and extends to *The Vampires* (1966) and *Lion Books* (1971, *Raion bukkusu*). If large ears typically occur in labs or on other planets and imply an ode to human intelligence and the power of science, the tail is associated with jungles and mountains; what it evokes is a moral contrast between man and nature, highlighting the pettiness of human evil and arrogance against the background of Nature's permanence, and critiquing humanity from the perspective of benevolent animals. *Zero Man* (1959–60, *Zero man*) is a particularly memorable work in this regard, as it weaves the two genealogies of ears and tails into an elaborate tapestry of motifs (Figure 4). The story achieves an almost epic scale as it traverses a variety of spaces and places that runs the gamut of the Tezuka world: the mountains of Tibet, futuristic Tokyo, jungles, the American Wild West, the underground world, Mars, and so on. The intricate story is not easy to summarize but goes more or less as follows:

Zero Men are extraterrestrials with squirrel-like tails who migrated from Venus to Earth in far antiquity. Despite their highly developed science and civilization, Zero Men avoid humans like the plague and lead a quiet, reclusive life in the Underground City deep beneath the Himalayas, under the despotic rule of their patriarch the Great Monk. A young Zero Man named Rickie, wandering in the mountains, accidentally encounters a Japanese soldier, who adopts him, and he grows up in Tokyo as a human being while concealing his tail from the eyes of others. Rickie later learns that the Zero Man couple that Doctor Tategami brought back from a research trip to the Himalayas are his biological parents, and this inspires him to visit the Underground City again; but disillusioned by the dystopic oppressiveness of Zero Man society, he soon returns to Japan. Meanwhile, the Zero Men underground plot to conquer the surface world. They launch their plot by dispatching to Japan a mysterious character named Hell-King (Enma daiō), who proceeds to forcibly transform Tokyo into a Zero Man–style prison city. Rickie's efforts to stop the Zero Men inadvertently result in the explosion of Mt. Fuji. Hell-King attempts to contain the explosion using an electronic megafreezer, but this in turn causes Earth to enter an artificially induced ice age. The struggle for survival that

ensues divides humans, one half of whom are wiped out in a war against Zero Men while the other half attempts a desperate exodus to Venus. Meanwhile, a revolt against the despotic Monk erupts in the Underground City, and the Great Monk seeks refuge with the humans. In the meantime, the threat of a new Ice Age is averted, owing to Nature's great resilience, and Earth returns to its moderate climate. Peace is struck between the Zero Man revolutionary government and the humans back from Venus, and Rickie is selected to act as the human ambassador. Eventually, however, the evil Charcoal Grey appropriates the Zero Men's high-tech laser matter-extinguisher to reduce the Underground City to rubble, and the Zero Men return to Venus.

The extent to which *Zero Man* overlaps with *Ambassador Atom* should be evident from the above. There is an extraordinary degree of correspondence between the two, such as between the Zero Men and the extraterrestrials, the new Ice Age and the food crisis, the laser matter-extinguisher and the chemical cell-extinguisher, and Charcoal Grey and Doctor Tenma. The endings are practically identical, with the nonhumans migrating to Venus and human society returning to its prior state. It then seems only natural that Rickie



『0マン』は人間の〈法〉のための長大な物語である。

FIGURE 4. *Zero Man* is an epic narrative on the Law of humanity. Copyright Tezuka Productions.

bears a significant resemblance to Atom, with identical round clear eyes and a puffy nose. We may also note that Rickie's countenance is quite similar to Mii-chan's in *Lost World.* It thus becomes apparent that Rickie's baseball cap with the prominent visor is, like Atom's horns, a permutation of rabbit ears.

Rickie grows up among humans as a strange boy with a tail, and later, losing his tail in a rocket accident, returns to his native land as a strange tailless Zero Man. The artificial tail attached to him to replace his lost real one is a token of his ambivalent belonging, neither fully human nor fully Zero Man. The one significant difference that separates *Ambassador Atom* and *Zero Man* concerns the ultimate allegiance of this intermediate figure. Whereas Atom remains among humans to enact an interminable drama of self-sacrifice for the sake of humans, Rickie's final choice is instead to leave humans behind and go to Venus, thus altogether forsaking his wish to become human. This is how Rickie manages to escape the nagging sense of lack vis-à-vis humans that haunts the many liminal characters in Tezuka's previous works, thereby averting the tragic self-sacrificing death of his precursors. It is in this sense that *Zero Man* brings a certain closure to the worldview of Tezuka's earlier works.

WHY IS IT THAT HUMANS CANNOT MAINTAIN EVEN THEIR BASIC SENSE OF HUMANITY WITHOUT BEING CONTINUOUSLY DESIGNATED AS SUCH BY OTHERS?

But all the above still leaves us with a basic question: why is it that nonhumans always have to become the object of exclusion in Tezuka's works? Or, to put it differently, why is it that humans cannot maintain even their basic sense of humanity without being continuously designated as such by others? Why is it that the moment this act of designation ceases, humans always lapse into uncontrollable anxiety and eventually chaos? Such are the questions that continue to haunt the readers of Tezuka's works.

The question is brought to sharper relief by comparing Tezuka's works like *Jungle Emperor Leo* and *Astro Boy* to works by another pioneer of postwar Japanese manga, Mizuki Shigeru,[5] notably the author of *Neko-himesama* (1975, Cat princess) and *Kappa no Sanpei* (1961–62, Sanpei the *kappa*).[6] In Mizuki's works, too, humans encounter countless nonhumans: *kappas,* monsters, aboriginals of the southern seas, and so on; but there, the nonhuman others are never the objects of exclusion. Instead, faced with the fear and allure of the unknown, it is the human protagonist who gradually sheds his human outline, eventually mutating into a nonhuman in a blissful metamorphosis. Having thus thoroughly outgrown the parochial notion of humanity

and embraced the other world in body and in soul, those human mediators in Mizuki's works cannot ever find a happy home back in the human world (if they return there at all). To the poignant self-sacrificing death of Tezuka we can thus contrast Mizuki's strangely comforting nondeath that is permeated by the bliss of the Pleasure Principle. Whereas the former ceaselessly strives to draw and to redraw human Law, the latter does not hesitate to destroy human order on a whim. My nagging sense of discomfort with Tezuka derives from what this contrast serves to highlight, the obsessiveness with which Tezuka continues to reestablish human order even as he attempts to relativize it.

Notes

1. *Manga genron* [The principles of manga] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1994).

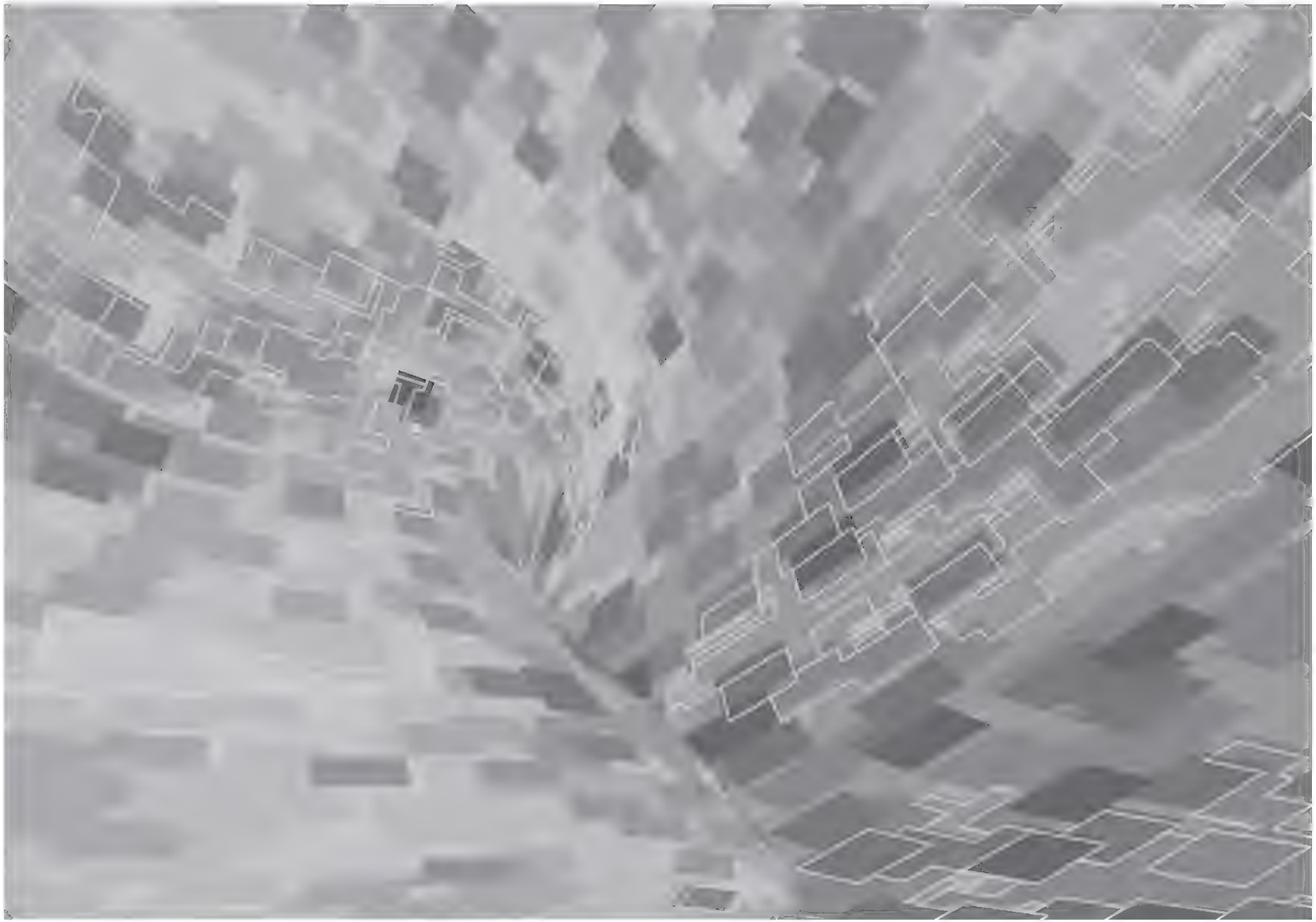
2. *Ambassador Atom* is the literal translation of the Japanese title, but the established English translation for this title is *Captain Atom*. I have used *Ambassador Atom* here to make a connection with Ōtsuka Eiji's article in this volume, where Atom is discussed as a literal ambassador. But for other Tezuka manga I have used the established English titles and character names, even for works not yet published in English translation.

3. The treaty signed in 1951 between Japan and the Allies that officially ended World War II. For more on the connections between *Ambassador Atom* and the treaty, see the essay by Ōtsuka Eiji in this volume.

4. In an influential essay ("The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," *Ecrits* [New York: Norton, 2005], 1–7), the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan argued that infants initially lack a coherent sense of their own body and that their experiences consist of a loose aggregate of decentered physical sensations focused on particular organs. A coherent body image emerges only through the infants' identification with an externalized image either of themselves (mirror image) or of others on which one projects one's own image. The notion of the mirror stage was central to Lacan's early theory of subject formation.

5. Mizuki Shigeru (b. 1922) is one of the most influential, prolific, and widely read manga authors in postwar Japan. Best known for his long-lasting series *Gegege no Kitaro*, he single-handedly created the unique genre of "*yōkai* manga" and remains its greatest master. While *yōkai* can be roughly translated as "monster," *yōkai* manga leans more toward humor than horror and tends to draw heavily on folklore. It thus carries a decidedly more autochthonous tone than the genre of fantasy. For details, see Michael Foster's essay in this volume.

6. A *kappa* is a humanoid monster found in Japanese folklore that is said to inhabit ponds and rivers.



ŌTSUKA EIJI
Translated by Thomas LaMarre

Disarming Atom: Tezuka Osamu's Manga at War and Peace

AMBASSADOR ATOM: A PARABLE OF THE JAPAN–U.S. PEACE TREATY

Nearly all readers of manga are familiar with Tezuka Osamu's most representative series *Mighty Atom* (*Tetsuwan Atomu*),[1] but casual readers may not be familiar with the earliest version of this series, *Ambassador Atom,* which began serialization in the April issue of *Shōnen* in 1951. This was also the year the Japan–U.S. Peace Treaty was signed.[2] Because the American government had sent a draft of the peace treaty to the Japanese government earlier in the year, on March 27, the topic of the treaty was already in the air when *Ambassador Atom* (*Atomu Taishi*) appeared. Because *Ambassador Atom* ran in serialization until March 1952, in the course of its serialization Japan signed both the Treaty of Peace with Japan[3] and the Japan–U.S. Mutual Security Treaty,[4] and saw its "special envoys" and members of the "plenary committee" return to Japan. The very title, *Ambassador Atom,* imparts to its hero a set of attributes completely different from those of the later "Mighty Atom," and as I will discuss below, the presentation of Atom as an ambassador for the nation in a time of conflict reflects the concerns of the era. Nonetheless, the image of the

WE DON'T HAVE TO READ TOO DEEPLY INTO *AMBASSADOR ATOM* TO DETECT A PARABLE OF THE JAPAN–U.S. PEACE TREATY AND OF JAPAN UNDER THE OCCUPATION, WHICH GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE ALLIED POWERS (SCAP) IN JAPAN, DESCRIBED AS A "BOY OF TWELVE" IN TERMS OF ITS MATURATION TOWARDS DEMOCRACY.

hero as an ambassador, appearing at the time of the Japan–U.S. Peace Treaty should not be read only in negative terms, merely as a sort of diplomatic gesture.

In the issue of *Shōnen* prior to the one in which *Ambassador Atom* began serialization, a preview notice appears. Yet, as historians of manga know, the preview does not contain any images of Atom but only the title that Tezuka gave to the editors in advance: *Atom Continent* (*Atomu tairiku*). While there is no way to know to what extent the transformation of *Atom Continent* into *Ambassador Atom* betrays an awareness of events surrounding the Japan–U.S. Peace Treaty, the storyline of *Ambassador Atom* certainly reads very much like a parable of the Treaty.[5]

Ambassador Atom tells of an unexpected invasion of Earth by aliens. Oddly enough, for each and every alien there is a human who resembles him or her, like two peas in a pod. To give an example, for the youth named Tama-chan, there appears among the aliens a youth with exactly the same face and features, and this set-up extends to all the other characters. There is but one exception: the robot boy Atom, built by Dr. Tenma. The robot Atom is a sort of death effigy, as Dr. Tenma constructs Atom as an exact likeness of his beloved son Tobio after the boy's death in a traffic accident. While it is never explained logically in the story, it would seem that, insofar as Earth now lacks a Tobio, no Tobio appears among the aliens, and, consequently, only the robot Atom has no corresponding match. Such neutrality[6] is the condition for Atom to play the role of ambassador, and, in fact, Atom receives permission from the aliens to call on them, and he enters into peace talks and succeeds. What is striking is that Atom also suffers under the burden of the lot cast upon him by his father Dr. Tenma, that of "the child who can't grow up."

Dr. Tenma constructs the robot as an exact likeness of his son and yet, exasperated by the robot's inability to grow, winds up selling the robot Tobio to a circus. Thus Atom's first appearance as a character presents an odd variation on the narrative pattern of the "exile of the noble."[7] Naturally, to any adult with common sense it seems unlikely that a scientist could fail to comprehend that a robot cannot grow, but we must not forget that this story operates as a "parable." As a "child who can't grow up," Atom aspires to peace talks with the "invaders," and in that capacity, Atom offers them his own

"way" as a robot, all of which reflects the diplomacy of that era. What merits closer attention, however, is the final sequence, in which the aliens send Atom an "adult face" after peace is established (Figure 1).

The aliens send him this message:

> Dear Atom,
>
> We constructed an adult face for you using your current face for reference. It won't do for you to remain forever a boy. When next we meet, let it be as equals.
>
> Farewell.

Thereupon Atom's friend Tama-chan shouts to the departing aliens, "Next time I too will be grown up!" and with this frame, *Ambassador Atom* ends.

Clearly, we don't have to read too deeply into *Ambassador Atom* to detect a parable of the Japan–U.S. Peace Treaty and of Japan under the Occupation, which General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) in Japan, described as a "boy of twelve" in terms of its maturation towards democracy. SCAP's Regulations for Newspapers and Publishers



FIGURE 1. Frames 51–55 from the closing sequence of Tezuka Osamu's postwar manga *Atomu taishi* (*Ambassador Atom*). Courtesy of Tezuka Productions.

were abolished just after *Ambassador* began serialization, on May 1, 1951, so in presenting the invaders as exact likenesses and not setting up overt symbolism for America, Tezuka was certainly not oblivious to concerns about censorship.

"SURROGATES FOR AMERICAN JUSTICE" OR "AMBASSADORS OF DISARMAMENT"?

One of Tezuka's memos about *Continent Atom* proves that he originally had a very different framework in mind, one that underwent substantial transformation to arrive at the story that we have today in *Ambassador Atom.* The following is taken from the memo as it appeared in an exhibit on Tezuka Osamu at the Isetan museum in Yoyogi in 2004.

> Ōtsuka Heita: a sham communist, a politician who proposes to enslave the shadowmen
>
> Korinteddo Dōrumen: American president, pacifist, proposes opening the sea to the shadowmen
>
> Dr. Tenma: loses his only son Noboru and suffers a nervous breakdown; makes plastic reconstructions of Noboru called Atom 1, 2, 3, 4, with the intent of replacing him; he later considers making slaves of the shadowmen, but he is stopped by another Dr. Tenma and Noboru; he makes amends and commits suicide
>
> Atom: a plastic robot that is an exact likeness of Tenma Noboru; becomes cultivated through instruction; possessor of a man-made brain, he pursues what is right and opposes what is wrong; goes to the side of the shadowmen and defeats Dr. Tenma

While the problem of "shadowman slavery" in *Continent Atom* anticipates the theme of discrimination against robots and the robot emancipation movement in *Ambassador Atom,* it is the Japanese "sham communist" who proposes slavery in *Continent Atom,* and Dr. Tenma supports him. What strikes me as particularly significant, however, is that the American president advocates "emancipation" of the "shadowmen." The role of Atom is that of the robot who "pursues what is right and opposes what is wrong" and "defeats Dr. Tenma." Such a role provided the model for the Atom of the animated

TV series, who heroically pursues justice. This Atom, who believes in "what is right" and who "defeats" "what is wrong" under the aegis of American pacifism, faithfully reflects another facet of the postwar, namely the achievement of "peace" through the formation of Japan's Self-Defense Forces (announced by Yoshida Shigeru on January 31, 1952) and the signing of the Mutual Assistance Security Pact (February 29, 1952).

Ultimately, however, Tezuka strove to present Atom as an ambassador for disarmament rather than a surrogate for American justice. The unwritten Atom of *Continent Atom* is a historical trace of postwar Japan (and its status as surrogate), while the written Atom of *Ambassador Atom* is faithful to the Preface and Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution (and disarmament). Put another way, America drops out of the picture as the partner in Japan's peace, and the subsequent shift toward a sense of "we ourselves" is surely the first sign that the influence of America was becoming difficult to detect, a transformation that deeply bothered the literary and cultural critic Etō Jun.

THE ATOM WITH THE DISNEY-ESQUE BODY THAT "NEVER GROWS UP" NONETHELESS DOES "GROW UP" BY REJECTING MILITARY POWER AND ENTERING INTO PEACE TALKS.

Immediately after *Ambassador Atom,* Tezuka wrote manga adaptations of Disney's *Bambi* and *Pinocchio* in quick succession. There's no need here to discuss at length how Tezuka reworked *Jungle Emperor* (aka *Kimba the White Lion* [1950–54, *Janguru taitei*]) and the serialized *Atom* in the image of *Bambi* and *Pinocchio,* respectively. In contrast, in one of his wartime sketches, "Till the Day of Victory" (1954, *Shōri no hi made*), Tezuka portrays a youth (probably an image of himself) who is slain by Mickey Mouse with a machine gun. To consider the work of Tezuka—who inaugurated his own mode of expression under the American Occupation by reaccepting and reconciling himself with Disney-esque expression—we need briefly to consider what his total reconciliation with Disney means in the wake of the Japan–U.S. Peace Treaty.

On the one hand, it certainly seems that Tezuka stacked things in favor of the postwar constitution: the Atom with the Disney-esque body that "never grows up" nonetheless does "grow up" by rejecting military power and entering into peace talks. Today, even as Japan argues with Russia over possession of the Sakhalin islands and aspires to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council in order to become a "full-fledged nation," Japan's promised maturity—analagous to Tama-chan's promise that the "next time we meet, I'll be grown up too"—appears terribly stunted. On the other hand, Tezuka himself suppressed the ending of *Ambassador Atom* for a long

time, for it raised difficult questions about how Atom as a hero continued to live on in child form in the subsequent series. Consequently, even if we're not particularly satisfied with the final choice in this ending, there remains a certain tension between the Ambassador Atom who made it to the page and the Ambassador Atom who did not, reflecting the ways in which the Japan–U.S. Peace Treaty, as figured in the Preface and Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, was torn between mutual security and pacificism (based on disarmament). In this respect, *Ambassador Atom* truly is a manga of the Japan–U.S. Peace Treaty.

Why did Tezuka have Atom disarm? This was not simply a matter of Tezuka arriving at a conclusion under complicated political conditions. Rather the problematic of disarmament is related to Tezuka's choices vis-à-vis manga technique.[8] The decision to disarm Atom arose from Tezuka's reacceptance of Disney during the Occupation.

THE PREWAR RECEPTION OF DISNEY: PICTORIAL SYSTEMS AND THE "UNDYING BODY"

I should first point out that it is a mistake to view Tezuka Osamu's manga system of representation[9] as originating entirely in Japan. It is not impossible to see manga in terms of a lineage that goes back to *ukiyoe* of the Edo period or comic animal art of the medieval period, but such a view of history ignores the "invented traditions" prevalent in so many of the introductory books on manga published in the late 1920s and early 1930s. With respect to stylistic innovations at that time, the reception of Disney is exceedingly important. Tezuka's first experience with Disney in the prewar era was not with the original animated films. Reference is often made to Shaka Bontarō's *Umi no kaizoku* (1935, Sea pirates) as a source for Tezuka, and this manga is very reminiscent of his *Mikkii no katsuyaku* (Mickey's activities) published in 1934. In the absence of international copyright laws, Shaka Bontarō could appropriate Disney characters, and the overall conceit is that Japanese manga characters welcome Mickey and other Disney figures on their trip to Japan. Significantly, however, when Tezuka first brings Mickey onto the stage in his own manga, it is in the wartime sketch "Till the Day of Victory," and Tezuka is not copying from Shaka but drawing on the original Disney animation (Figure 2).

With respect to the influence of American animation on his work, Tezuka made the following comments in an interview:

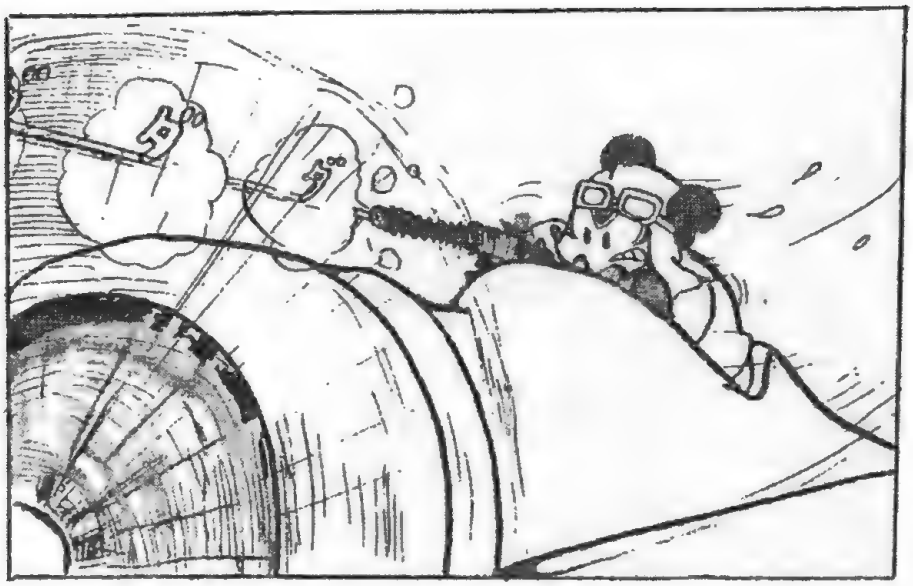


FIGURE 2. Mickey Mouse fires on the Japanese protagonist in Tezuka Osamu's wartime manga *Shōri no hi made* (*Till the Day of Victory*). Courtesy of Tezuka Productions.

TEZUKA OSAMU: There are three filmmakers whom I deeply admire, Cecil B. DeMille, Chaplin, and Disney. With the death of Chaplin in 1977, all had three had died, and I had the impression that my era too had come to an end.

ISHIKO JUN: But that's not really the case. (laughs)

TEZUKA: But now gradually all three will be forgotten, the very people I thought, for a number of reasons, were the most characteristic of filmmakers. DeMille's spectacles are such a crucial part of cinema. Even in manga, when you depict things panoramically, you're doing film spectacle.

ISHIKO: The DeMille style has often made an appearance in your work, hasn't it? In the depiction of natural disasters, floods, vast destruction, and so forth. There are touches that recall the scene in *The Ten Commandants* where the Red Sea parts.

TEZUKA: During the war I had a terrifying experience of an air raid. I saw an entire city almost instantly consumed in flames before my eyes. It's not the best way of putting it, but that was spectacle. Because I saw it with my own eyes, I felt somehow compelled to put into pictures this kind of large-scale destruction or large-scale conflict. Conversely, however, such scenes tend to

> deemphasize characters. . . . With respect to manga, I was deeply influenced by American manga around age 15 or 16, around 1937 or 1938. Still, American manga themselves were deeply influenced by the golden age of film comedies, like those of Buster Keaton or Mack Sennett. In many of the gag manga produced over there, you see manga characters make faces just like those of Roscoe Arbuckle, Ben Turpin, or other film comedians. Chaplin was especially important, with his crab legs and oversized shoes. These sorts of things make for manga without any alteration. In other words, illustrations by American cartoonists of that era drew from that bunch of comedians. Likewise I diligently copied them, and my manga were full of crab legs and oversized shoes. And then the comedies of Chaplin with their powerful social satire and "smiling through the tears" had a huge impact on me in terms of content. But above all it is their rhythm that influenced me.[10]

Around the same time that Tezuka encountered Disney through the works of Shaka, the influence of Disney on American animation also made an impact on him. And yet, as Tezuka aptly recognized, the stylistics[11] of Hollywood film comedies reflected in these different works was of greater importance than Disney per se. Common to Hollywood comedies and Disney animation is the fact that the characters are physically "tough to kill." Even when Mickey falls from a cliff and is squashed flat into the ground, he reappears in the next scene without a scratch. This "undying" or "deathless" physicality is one of the legacies of Hollywood in anime, which comes via Disney. Needless to say, such an "undying" physicality is a definite trend in pictorial forms of representation based on caricature, and at the same time, as Max Lüthi has shown, fairy tales have an analogous "invunerable" physicality, which Lüthi styles as "flatness."[12] Although such physicality may not be entirely a Hollywood notion, this ideology still reigns to some degree in Hollywood, as the title of a film like *Die Hard* suggests. Space does not permit a full discussion, but I would like to add in passing that the anime-like physicality of Hollywood provided the basis for *The Matrix* to stage Japanese anime-style movements with live actors.

IT IS A MYTH THAT THE "PICTORIAL TECHNIQUES" OF MANGA DERIVE FROM THE WORK OF A HANDFUL OF MANGA ARTISTS WHO RESIDED AT THE TOKIWASŌ IN THE POSTWAR ERA.

In sum, it is a myth that the "pictorial techniques"[13] of manga derive from the work of a handful of manga artists who resided at the Tokiwasō[14] in the postwar era. Rather, the reigning wisdom among researchers of manga

history today is that, around 1935, an important dimension of manga's so-called pictorial techniques took shape through its reception of American animation, the influences of which were revived by Tezuka Osamu during the Occupation.

REGULATION OF MANGA BEFORE AND DURING THE WAR: THE TECHNICAL REALISM OF WEAPONRY

One thing still demands consideration, however. Another pictorial technique that was introduced into manga in the early 1930s is formally very different from the pictorial techniques of early animation with its Disney-esque bodies. A manga artist from the early 1930s who merits particular attention is the illustrator Ōshiro Noboru. He did the artwork for *Mars Exploration* (1940, *Kasei tanken*), with writer Koguma Hideo (under the pseudonym of Asahi Tarō).

As regards Ōshiro's *Funny Factory* (1941, *Yukai na kōjō*), the artist begins works muttering some incomprehensible refrain to the effect, "Well, I have all the reference materials I need; with a little elbow grease, I'll make a book." Somehow or other the artist has gained access to materials about "factory tours," which are evidently a source for his story of a young protagonist who goes to Manchuria in the company of a professor to inquire into "veins of iron" and an "iron factory" constructed there. Needless to say, the story reflects the national policy that prevailed at that time. It was not merely a thematization of national policy that was desired in manga but also "scientific" representation. If the author was muttering about manga as something that could be written simply by collecting reference materials, it is because it was "science" not "fantasy" that conferred authority on manga, which bias reflects a very real change in attitude at that time. In fact, in *Funny Factory,* science and fantasy are still in competition, and in the end, the national policy factory scenes culminate in these words: "All in all, what a delightful dream it was! And a truly topical book that shows it as it is!"

According to Miyamoto Hiroto, in the Prospectus Regarding the Improvement of Children's Reading Materials that the Ministry of Home Affairs issued to publishing houses on October 1938, most desirable were children's manga that did "full justice" to "Japan–China Cooperation." Ōshiro's depiction of Japan–China cooperation in *Funny Factory* certainly fits the bill for manga under government regulation. Miyamoto reminds us that under these circumstances the "full justice" looked for in manga entailed "scientific realism."

> In children's manga under the government regulations for children's reading materials, exaggeration, ellipsis, and absurdity were restricted in favor of large weapons. Such was the logic of the regulations: this was a war of science, which demanded a scientific attitude among children, and thus scientific depiction was taken as realism.[15]

In other words, through "science" Ōshiro strove for "realism," whence the presentation of its author with piles of reference materials before him. Thus, on the one hand, in those scenes that might well be thought of as "dream," the factory machinery is depicted with great "realism." On the other hand, insofar as it happens "in a dream," the characters are depicted with Disney-esque antirealism (precisely because to enter a dream is to enter an anime world). In sum, scientific realism and the Disney-esque coexist in the same manga.

REALISTIC REPRESENTATION AND PERSPECTIVAL TECHNIQUES BECAME THE PREFERRED IDEOLOGY FOR DRAWING AND PAINTING IN TIMES OF WAR AND, IN THE COURSE OF THE FIFTEEN-YEAR ASIA-PACIFIC WAR, CAME TO BE SOUGHT AFTER IN MANGA TOO.

In the same year (1941), immediately after the start of the U.S.–Japan war, Ōshiro published *Travel by Rail* (*Kisha no ryokō*). Its most obvious difference with the previous work lies in the bold use of techniques of perspective.[16] In order to do "full justice" to the train car in which father and son are traveling, and to the passengers gathered there to hear various stories from the father, *Travel by Rail* employs techniques of perspective very precisely, breaking with the classical style of composition used in prior works (such as *Norakuro* or "Stray Black"), in which characters were arranged from right to left across the frame, as if seen "on stage" by those seated in the audience. Scientific realism leads inevitably to the adoption of techniques of perspective within manga, and it is used to greatest effect in the depiction of the train.

When "true sketching" (*shinsha*) or "realism" based on perspective was initially used in modern Japan, it was at the demand of the Army and Navy as a drafting technique. Immediately after the Meiji Restoration (1868), art schools were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Industry (Kōbushō). Artists who accompanied the military during the Sino-Japanese War (1904–5) further developed realistic drawing techniques. Realistic representation and perspectival techniques became the preferred ideology for drawing and painting in times of war and, in the course of the Fifteen-Year Asia-Pacific War,[17] came to be sought after in manga too.

The system of pictorical representation in *Travel by Rail* can be read as a precedent for Tezuka. Rather than being a mere application of film and animation techniques to manga, this system of representation emerged through "regulations" promoting realism in the form of perspective and "scientism."

THE POTENTIAL OF POSTWAR MANGA, BORN AND KILLED BY MICKEY

One result of the combination of techniques discussed previously was a situation in which manga embraced realism in the portrayal of weaponry and anime-style[18] antirealism in the depiction of characters, which made possible something like Tezuka's wartime manga "Till the Day of Victory." In this sketch, which bears the same title as a famous national policy film,[19] perspectival realism and anime-style antirealism have found a way to coexist. I would like to insist on this point: at this time the pictorial system of representation found in Tezuka's manga deploys a combination of perspectival techniques and faithful realism.[20] Note in Figure 3 the realistic portrayal of the American warplane in conjunction with exact perspective.

A contradiction arises between the realistic depiction of industrial machinery, trains, and weaponry, and the world of "undying" Mickey-style characters, characters without physical substance. Tezuka betrays a certain anxiety about this contradiction, presenting an apparently deathless young man who receives a direct hit from the machine-gun bullets fired by Mickey's realistically rendered fighter plane. The techniques of representation are such that the actual body of the youth, head slumped and gushing blood, remains anime-like. In this system of representation, I detect a symbolic turning point in the history of manga in terms of how it will depict "life" and "death" and "sex"—the inevitable mortality of the living body appears fundamentally at odds with Disney-esque antirealism. This is how postwar manga could, on the one hand, internalize the topics of life and death in a



FIGURE 3. The Japanese protagonist of Tezuka's wartime manga *Shōri no hi made* (*Till the Day of Victory*) watches American fighter planes close in. Courtesy of Tezuka Productions.

"literary" manner and, on the other hand, move in the direction of pornography associated with the *moe* style of anime drawing.[21]

In sum, this system of representation arises as Japanese wartime thought was forced to coexist with Americanism in the form of Disney-esque technique, within a single manga.

REJECTING WEAPONRY REALISM, DISARMING AMBASSADOR ATOM

As Figure 4 clearly indicates, the "pictorial system of representation" that Tezuka uses in *New Treasure Island* (1947, *Shin takarajima*) is not that of wartime perspectival realism, which returns us to the problem of "anti-armament" in *Ambassador Atom*.

In this composition, Tezuka allows for perspective in terms of movement into the picture, and yet, if you look closely at the "car," not only is it deformed but also the tires appear to crumple as it moves along. Simply put, it is drawn antirealistically. As I discussed previously, it was the "scientism"



FIGURE 4. A sequence from Tezuka Osamu's postwar manga *Shintakarajima* (*New Treasure Island*). Courtesy of Tezuka Productions.

touted in the wartime regulations that encouraged detailed depiction of industrial machinery, weaponry, and trains. Because I don't have the space and time to provide examples in this context, let me simply say that it was around 1940 that manga became thoroughly realistic in their depictions of fighter planes and weapons.

Characteristic of Tezuka's postwar manga is the use of an anime-like "system of representation" (that is, a filmic style) that forced open the realistic depiction of weaponry. In the Disney-esque world, even mechanical objects are drawn in the same manner as antirealistic characters. In his postwar manga, Tezuka carried forward the wartime scientism that resulted in the realistic depiction of weaponry or armaments, but also the antirealistic depiction of bodies introduced in the prewar era. The latter were to provide a premise for disarmament, because wartime realism proved unsuitable for drawing the character of Atom and for postwar manga more generally.

RETURNING TO REALISM IN WEAPONRY, REALIGNING MANGA WITH NATIONAL POLICY

Naturally the question remains as to whether postwar manga was destined to take such a path or whether such transformations followed from Tezuka's ethics. Was it a matter of personal judgment or broader historical forces? Historical study of manga attentive to World War II and the American Occupation has barely begun. In any case, "disarmament" in *Ambassador Atom* entails certain contradictions that echo those of the Japan–U.S. Peace Treaty. With Atom, Tezuka depicts a hero who stands in for American justice and yet acts as a negotiator on behalf of complete disarmament. Analogously, even as Tezuka abandoned the weaponry realism that had become mandatory during the war, he didn't accept Disney unconditionally. Rather he embraced the contradiction inherent in using antirealistic techniques to depict actual bodies that go to their deaths. He embraced this contradiction as part of the potential of postwar manga.

The "weaponry realism" that Tezuka renounced was subsequently revived in *Mobile Suit Gundam* (1979–80, *Kidō senshi Gandamu*), which used it to depict robots as weapons. Japanimation[22] and contemporary *otaku* culture have inherited this trend. Anime fans harkened to this revival of weaponry realism in the early work of Miyazaki Hayao, as well as to his keen interest in little girls. In effect, the origins of "*otaku* modes of expression" lie at least in part in the wartime era.

"*Otaku* modes of expression," compulsory today in manga, comprise both the possibilities and the difficulties in Tezuka's work. They thus continue to rework the contradictions between Americanism and scientism as they emerged in manga during the war and into the Occupation. As an author of manga scenarios, I cannot help but be concerned about the ways in which contemporary manga are prone to align themselves with national policy. I believe that we must not forget that our modes of expression originated in the crucible of that policy, made compulsory by government mandate.

In writing this, I reproach myself as well.

Translator's Notes

Originally published in Japanese under the title "Nichibei kōwa to 'Tetsuwan Atomu': Tezuka Osamu wa naze 'Atomu' o busō kaijo shita ka" [The U.S.–Japan Peace Treaty and *Tetsuwan Atomu*: Why did Tezuka Osamu disarm 'Atom'?], in "Rethinking the Occupation: Occupation or Liberation?" a special issue of *Kan* 22 (Summer 2005): 178–89.

1. While Tezuka first introduced the character of the robot Atom in 1951 in the manga entitled *Ambassdor Atom* (somewhat oddly translated on the TezukaOsamu@World Web site as *Captain Atom*), it was in 1952 that Tezuka began to serialize stories about the robot Atom under the title of *Tetsuwan Atomu* or *Mighty Atom*. He continued to publish Atom stories regularly in *Shōnen* until 1968, and even published Atom stories until 1981 in other venues. In 1963, Tezuka turned *Mighty Atom* into a black-and-white animated television series, one of the first in Japan, which was picked up in the United States almost immediately, with Fred Ladd "localizing" the series under the title of *Astro Boy* with English dubs. While the title *Astro Boy* is more familiar to readers, I have used the translation *Mighty Atom* because the idea of nuclear disarmament is crucial to Ōtsuka's argument: the robot ambassador, Atom, could be seen as a disarmed atomic weapon.

2. The peace treaty signed in San Francisco in 1951 officially ended the American Occupation of Japan. In English it is known as the U.S.–Japan Peace Treaty, while in Japanese it is called the Japan–U.S. Peace Treaty (*Nichi-bei kōwa*). I've retained the Japanese emphasis in this translation.

3. The Peace Treaty signed in San Francisco is also known as the Treaty of Peace with Japan (*Tainichi kōwa jōyaku*). A translation appears at www.vcn.bc.ca/alpha/learn/SanFran.htm.

4. On September 8, 1951, the United States and Japan signed the Mutual Security Treaty (*Nichi-bei anzen hoshō jōyaku*), which stationed U.S. troops on Japanese soil for the defense of Japan.

5. Ōtsuka notes that he has advanced a similar argument in other contexts, notably in his book *Atomu no Meidai: Tezuka Osamu to sengo manga*.

6. Ōtsuka uses the term *chūritsusei*, which could be translated as "neutrality" or "mediality." In effect, Atom is not so much neutral as medial.

7. Discussion of early and medieval Japanese literature in terms of the narrative

pattern or motif of the "exile of the noble" (*kizoku ryūri tan*) is associated with the famous folklore scholar, Orikuchi Shinobu (sometimes romanized as Origuchi).

8. Although the term *hōhō* is most frequently translated as "methods," I render it here as "technique," which seems more in keeping with Ōtsuka's discussion of *manga hōhō*.

9. I have rendered *manga hyōgen* as "manga system of representation" rather than "manga expression," because this conveys something of Ōtsuka's sense of the systematic nature of manga expression or representation.

10. Interview with Tezuka Osamu, in *Tezuka Osamu: manga no ougi* (Tezuka Osamu: The secret heart of manga), by Tezuka Osamu and Ishiko Jun (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1992).

11. Ōtsuka uses the term *keishikisei* to indicate the formalistic character of Hollywood cinema, which I have rendered as "stylistics" because the more literal "formality" or "formalasticity" does not make sense.

12. Ōtsuka uses the term *heimensei*, which is either flatness or two-dimensionality.

13. Like the term *manga hyōgen* or "manga (system of) representation," the term *eizō teki shuhō* implies something of a systematic set of techniques or methods for organizing pictorial or "imagistic" space.

14. The Tokiwasō, an apartment in Toshima, Tokyo, refers to a group of manga artists who resided there at the same time—Tezuka Osamu, Ishimori (Ishinomori) Shōtarō, Akatsuka Fujio, and Fujiko Fujio—who are deemed the founders of the postwar manga form in terms of style, systems of representation, and narrative.

15. Miyamoto Hiroto, "Mieru koto mienai koto: Matsushita Iwao no senchū – sengo" (Things seen and unseen: Matsushita Iwao during and after the war), *Shingenjitsu* 2 (2004).

16. In this essay, Ōtsuka uses two different terms to refer to techniques of perspective in art, *enkinhō* and *tōshi zuhō*, which are difficult to distinguish in translation. Because he uses them synonymously, I have rendered the first as "techniques of perspective" and the second as "perspectival techniques."

17. What is known in English as World War II is also called the Fifteen-Year Asia-Pacific War in Japanese, because the war began with the Manchuria Incident of 1931 and ended with Japan's surrender to the Allied Forces in 1945.

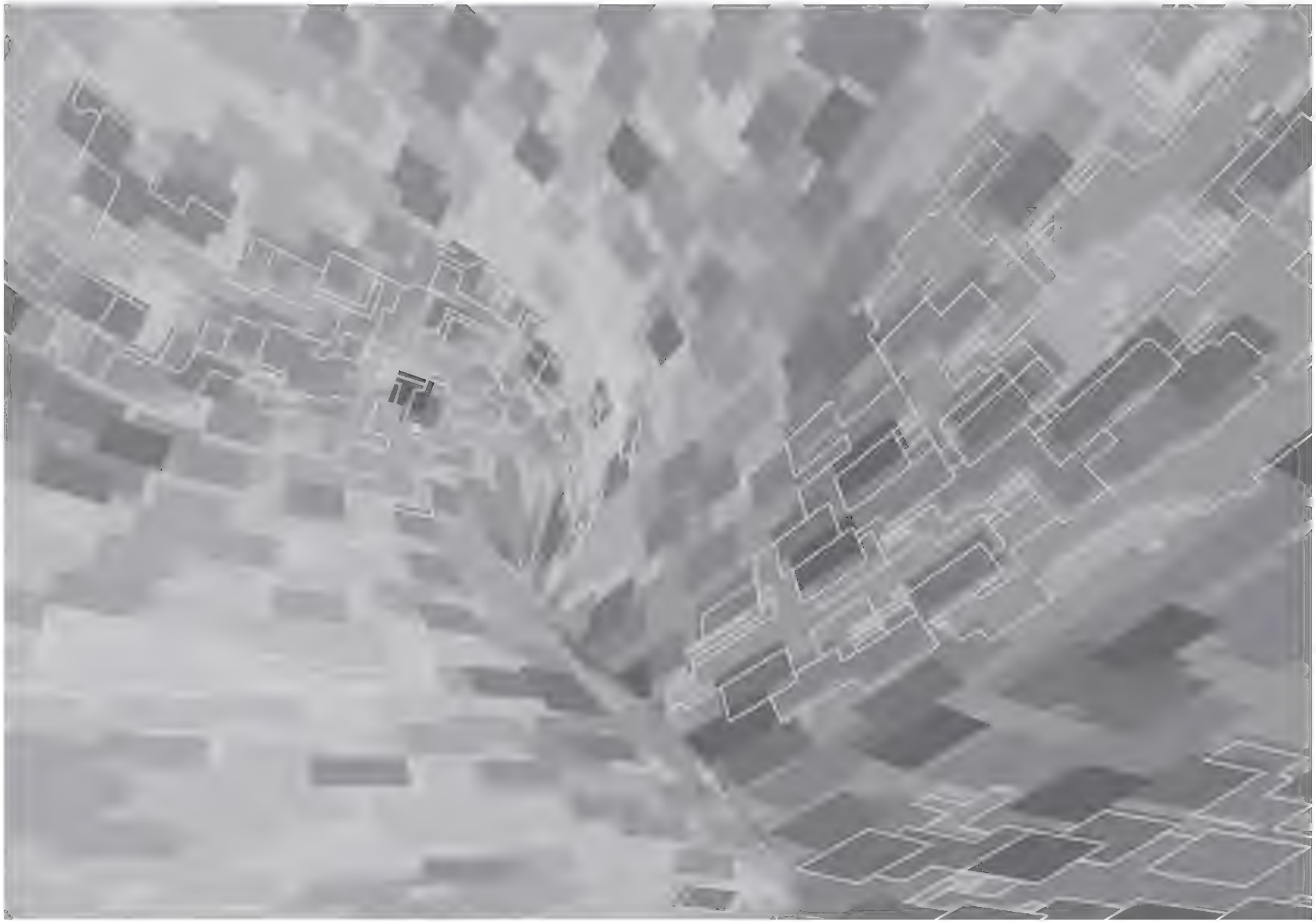
18. The term here is *anime-teki*, which literally means something like "animetic," but, although I prefer that translation, "anime-style" is more lucid in this instance.

19. Ōtsuka is referring to Naruse Mikio's 1945 film of the same name, *Shōri no hi made*.

20. The term *shajitsu teki riarizumu*, which suggests a form of realism based on tracing or copying reality, is rendered here for the sake of simplicity as "faithful realism."

21. *Moe*—literally, to sprout (or with alternative characters, to blaze)—refers to the élan or affective response of anime and manga fans to particular characters or, more precisely, to characteristics or features of characters, which become the basis for a sort of fetishistic relation to a character or series. Insofar as such an affective élan is most associated with male fans' quasi-sexual arousal, Ōtsuka associates *moe* with pornography.

22. The term "Japanimation" appears in katakana in the original.



LAWRENCE BIRD

States of Emergency: Urban Space and the Robotic Body in the *Metropolis* Tales

The tradition of the oppressed shows us that the "state of emergency" in which we live is not the exception but the rule.

—Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History"

One of the most ubiquitous and disturbing images in anime and manga—indeed, an image that comes close to defining them—is the apocalyptic destruction of the city, with a human or humanoid figure at the epicenter. Very often this figure shares in the destruction of the city: it comes apart as the city does. This mutually experienced destruction implies more than just catastrophe. Whether we are aware of it or not, bodies and cities act as each other's limits. On the one hand cities and buildings, as they shelter and enclose us, articulate a series of important distinctions. They mark a boundary between the spaces of the individual and those of the public. They afford a distinction between the space of citizens (often associated with the human) and the space beyond citizens, beyond civilization (the realms of the inhuman). On the other hand, our bodies in turn place limits on the city. Architecture and urban form take the human as their measure, literally and metaphorically. The shared destruction of these mutually delimiting figures—human

FREDER IS THE "MEDIATOR" WHO MIGHT RECONCILE THE COLD-HEARTED RULER WITH HIS SUFFERING PEOPLE.

and urban architectures—implies a modern crisis in what it means to be human and what it means to dwell together in a community.

Such images are all the more disturbing in their resonance with world events, which have with increasing frequency made us witnesses to the disintegration of real bodies, real cities. This implies some relation between anime and manga images of destruction and the history of destruction of cities in the real world. Particularly important in Japan is the leveling of cities at the end of World War II.[1] Nonetheless, neither the imagery nor the circumstances for such imagery is uniquely Japanese. Both speak to a more general crisis of modernity, and to the political, social, and ontological implications of modernity as articulated in architectural form. Here I propose a look at three instances of the destruction of the modern city and its relation to the disintegration of the human, all of which strive to topple the same behemoth, the modern Metropolis.

The first attempt on the Metropolis is Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), a silent film that has had such a profound impact on the dystopian imagination in science fiction. Although Lang's film toys with the possibility of the total destruction of the city, it ultimately offers something else: the immolation of a humanoid body, the sacrifice of a gynoid robot. Something similar occurs at the end of Tezuka Osamu's manga *Metropolis* (1949): while the rebellion of the robots threatens to destroy the Metropolis, ultimately it is the robot that disintegrates. The connection between Lang's and Tezuka's tales is tenuous. By his own account, Tezuka had seen only one still from Lang's film, and knew little else about its content.[2] Tezuka was not rewriting or remaking Lang's film, and the two stories differ significantly, as I will discuss below. Nonetheless, Tezuka and Lang are both concerned with the destructive forces of modernity and the potential obliteration of the very emblem of modernity, the Metropolis. It is on the basis of this shared concern for the modern destruction of body/city that director Rintarō and writer Ōtomo Katsuhiro's animated *Metropolis* (2001) folds together elements of the two prior *Metropolis* stories. The 2001 version achieves the urban apocalypse only promised in the prior attempts, ending with the destruction of the gynoid robot and the Metropolis.

Clearly, with the destruction of both the modern city and the human body at stake, there are political implications to such stories and images. In fact, each *Metropolis* presents a political scenario: the destruction of the city is linked to conflicts between factions and social classes as well as to the rise and fall of leaders. There is a direct engagement with structures of authority

and sovereignty. Significantly, structures of authority and sovereignty are imagined through structures of urban spaces and the positioning of artificial humans in relation to them. Here, with the three *Metropolis* stories as a guide, I wish to explore the relation between the structuration of urban space and the imagination of (and critical response to) modern sovereignty.

BETWEEN TOWER AND LABYRINTH

Lang's version of *Metropolis* appeared in the brief lull after Germany's defeat in the First World War, shortly after the ensuing inflationary crisis but before the Great Depression and the rise of Nazism. It speaks of the traumas and social tensions resulting from and foreshadowing these events.[3] Central to the film, for instance, is the oppression of the working class whose labor supports the luxury lifestyle of the rulers of the massive city Metropolis. A heartless autocrat, Joh Frederson, runs the city, and his rule depends on the genius of the brilliant inventor Rotwang. The film pits the merciless Joh against his own son Freder and against the woman with whom Freder falls in love, Maria, who is struggling to improve the lot of the workers. For Maria, Freder is the "Mediator" who might reconcile the cold-hearted ruler with his suffering people—which is presented as a reconciliation of the "head" and the "hands" through the "heart." Joh Frederson has other plans, however. He has already ordered Rotwang to construct the prototype for a machine to replace the human workers completely.[4] In some versions of the film, the robot takes the name "Futura." Once Joh becomes aware of Maria's efforts on behalf of the workers, he decides to give the robot her appearance. So the robot is a "False Maria," as other versions of the film dub her.[5]

The story turns on Joh's plot to substitute Futura for Maria, in order to incite the workers to violence, which would in turn justify their destruction. In the climactic scenes of the film, a flood sweeps through the lower levels of the Metropolis where workers are in full rebellion. Believing their children dead in the flood, and seeing the False Maria's role in the catastrophe, the rioting workers burn the False Maria at the stake. In the confusion, the true Maria and Freder are nearly killed, and in the end, seeing the near death of his son, Joh Frederson realizes the error of his ways. He gains the wisdom of a true leader and is reconciled with the workers.

Fritz Lang's film translated these social divisions and conflicts into urban form, drawing inspiration from metropolitan Manhattan.[6] He also drew on visions of the future city from such architects and artists as Antonio Sant'

THE TOWER OF BABEL CAN BE READ AS AN ARCHITECTURE THAT SUPERIMPOSES THE CONVOLUTED QUESTION MARK OF THE LABYRINTH UPON THE SOARING EXCLAMATION MARK OF THE TOWER.

Elia, Le Corbusier, and Hugh Ferris.[7] For modern architects, a functionalist division of urban space became a key tenet of design, and the utopian vision of modernist urban designs was predicated on a separation of spaces for living, working, and recreation. These divisions were typically horizontal, but some of the more fantastic plans applied these principles vertically as well. Lang, for instance, transformed this functional division vertically, and a strict vertical hierarchy structures his Metropolis. Mid-air bridges and train lines spawn the yawning canyons between towering skyscrapers. The upper classes live in the upper reaches, in graciously partitioned spaces of play and repose. Underground, far from the light of day, are two levels of austerely delineated space. There are the worker's tenements, where the bodies that labor for the wealthy reside. In addition there are the machine rooms, where they work and occasionally die as they labor to keep the machinery of the city running. The New Tower of Babel, a skyscraper dominating the skyline, provides an axis for the vertical hierarchy. It is the control center for the entire city, with main thoroughfares radiating from it, while its internal mechanisms plunge down into the lowest levels. The subterranean tenements and machine rooms form part of this rational axis.[8] Insofar as the New Tower of Babel serves as the axis for this fundamentally vertical gesture, the entire city appears as one great tower (Figure 1).

Now the biblical Tower of Babel that this structure evokes was in fact a ziggurat, a species of pyramid that one ascended along a path that spiraled up its perimeter to the apex. The Tower of Babel thus combines two different, potentially contradictory architectural structurations of movement: the tower and the labyrinth. In Greek mythology, the labyrinth was the maze built by the first architect Daedalus at the behest of a sovereign, Minos, in order to hide his wife's monstrous offspring. At the center of the labyrinth dwelled the Minotaur, half bull, half man. Each year Minos forced young men and women into the maze, where they invariably lost their way and fell prey to the Minotaur. The Labyrinth implies both disorientation and hybridization. It spatially poses the question of "where?" and "who?" but offers only cryptic replies. In contrast to the Labyrinth, the tower unequivocally marks a place and acts as a beacon, as if to answer the question posed by the Labyrinth: "Where?" "Here!" And, in response to the question of confused identity or tangled origins, the Tower poses a unitary and unifying entity. In effect, the Tower of Babel can be read as an architecture that superimposes the



FIGURE 1. The New Tower of Babel dominates the skyline of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927).

convoluted question mark of the Labyrinth upon the soaring exclamation mark of the Tower. It is a figure that at once rectifies and twists spatial orientations, actions, and identities.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Tower of Babel came to represent man's hubris, his attempt to ascend to the level of God. Hence it supplied an apt metaphor for modernity, when man really did lay claim to godlike powers, pushed God aside and proclaimed Him dead, only to discover that human works did not prove a sufficient replacement for divinity. This is ostensibly how the *Metropolis* films conjure forth the Tower of Babel: as an icon for the inevitable failure of the modern project.

While the Metropolis of Lang's film is structured around the New Tower of Babel, it also offers a labyrinth: twisting passages and catacombs beneath the city, at once spaces of danger, secrecy, and safety (Figure 2). Yet even as these labyrinthine structures appear to unravel the vertical authority of the city, they are inseparable from it. The city generates them and imparts intensity to them. Ultimately even the rational axis of the New Tower partakes of the labyrinth. The austere worker housing and the machine rooms that form part of its modern machinery are also shadowy, smoky, and connected to the twisting underground catacombs. In other words, if Lang's Metropolis can

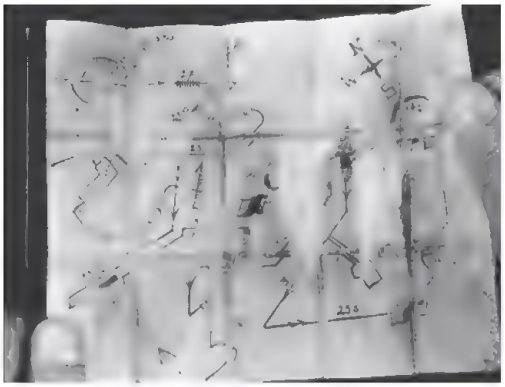


FIGURE 2. The Metropolis's suffering workers follow a map to refuge deep in the labyrinth of tunnels beneath the city.

be understood as a Tower of Babel, it is because it combines tower and labyrinth in specific ways. Another dominant building in the film, the Gothic Cathedral, also combines tower and labyrinth and provides some insights into the specificity of Lang's *Metropolis*.

Significantly, in medieval Europe, the soaring Gothic cathedrals were imagined as Towers of Babel, and on their floors, labyrinthine symbols of religious perambulation were etched. They thus combined a heavenward gesture with the convoluted motion of ritual. In circles of architecture and urban planning in 1920s Germany, however, the cathedral took on another meaning.[9] It was taken as the model for a truly German version of the American skyscraper.[10] Many believed that one massive central building in each city, in the manner of the cathedral, was preferable to the American model of unbridled commercial growth.[11] In this sense, the cathedral promised a way to produce a German modernity free of foreign influence. It is noteworthy that, in Lang's film, the people burn the False Maria at the stake before the cathedral, in an attempt to purify their realm of the dangers of hybridity (Figure 3).

In an essay published in 1929, Joseph Goebbels describes the Berlin cathedral Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtnis-Kirche as a refuge from the vicious cosmopolitan metropolis of Berlin. His vision is so reminiscent of Lang's film that it is likely that Goebells penned the essay after seeing the film.[12] While Lang was not a Nazi (he was in fact part Jewish), many critics have taken his film to task for its resonance with the reactionary political rhetoric gaining ground in Germany at the time. Lang himself indicates that his *Metropolis* was a favorite of Hitler and Goebbels.[13] This is not so surprising in view of the film's resolution of the conflicts and inequalities between different social factions and classes under the rule of a loving leader. This is not far from Hitler's vision of a united Volk, a people of one blood, sharing a common wellspring of life.

In Lang's *Metropolis* the happy resolution is predicated on the elimination of otherness, as embodied in the labyrinth and the female robot. Not only does the European tradition posit the biblical Tower of Babel as an Oriental structure[14] but the novel by Thea von Harbou (scriptwriter and Lang's wife) on which the film is based makes clear that the city's labyrinthine spaces are

also somehow Oriental. Rotwang's house, for instance, was built long ago by a mysterious man from the East.[15] Moreover, the city's site of debauchery is named Yoshiwara, after the famous pleasure quarters of the city of Edo (early modern Tokyo). All in all, the novel makes clear, even where the film does not, that a foreign Oriental presence, associated with labyrinthine spaces, threatens the upright character of the towering city. Not coincidentally, the robot is born of these spaces. Thus Futura or the False Maria comes to embody the otherness that menaces Metropolis.

Because the robot is a replica of Maria, only their behavior serves to distinguish the true and false Marias. The true Maria is upright with a direct yet demure regard, while the false Maria is twisted, winking and grimacing. They repeat the contrast between tower and labyrinth, but in this form, the tower can be purified of the labyrinth. The immolation of the robot promises to purify the upright city of its twisted otherness. Oddly, however, the other is not other in appearance, only in behavior. This recalls one of the great fears of Nazism, the fear of the alien undistinguishable from "us." In Lang's film, this disguised alien must be identified and destroyed to ensure the safety of



FIGURE 3. At the climax of the film the "False Maria," the robot double, is burned at the stake, on the parvis of the purifying cathedral. Here as elsewhere her body twists and distorts, its movement reflected in the gyrations of the rioting workers.

the populace. Significantly, at the climax of the film, the robot's human skin burns away, and she is shown to be nothing but a mechanical device, not a genuine human at all.

In sum, it is the displacement of the tension between tower and labyrinth onto the mechanical robot versus organic human that allows Lang's Metropolis to resolve its social tensions. Yet, insofar as the Metropolis, as the New Tower of Babel, is by its very nature a combination of tower and labyrinth, the city must always be at war with itself, in a constant state of emergency. It must commit to the identification and elimination of the peoples and spaces that allow for difference, social conflict and social interaction. The entire Metropolis has the potential to transform into a killing field, into a closed space in which aliens must be separated out and destroyed. In its disavowal of the hybridity of its structures, this model of modernity ultimately turns to self-destruction in an effort to overcome itself. The film makes possible a happy resolution. The other is burned under the people's eyes, the city is united under its proper leader, and the apocalypse is averted. Germany was not to have such a happy ending.

THE DARKENED SUN

Not long after the war engendered in part by the conditions articulated in Lang's film, Tezuka Osamu developed a very different set of relations to robots and the Metropolis in his manga *Metropolis* (1949) (Figure 4). Although Tezuka, like Lang, based his Metropolis on Manhattan (as seen in photographs and comics), Tezuka's city differs radically from Lang's. Where Lang develops a tension between vertical tower and spiraling labyrinth, Tezuka offers horizontal, diffuse, and largely unfocussed urban spaces. Tezuka draws lots of buildings, and his manga includes towers and labyrinths. The climactic battle, for example, takes place atop a skyscraper. But unlike Lang's Tower or Cathedral, Tezuka's skyscraper has no explicitly mythic or iconic status. Likewise, while some of the events of the story occur in labyrinthine spaces—for example, the underground headquarters of the evil Duke Red—they have no clear relationship to the overall organization of the city. They seem rather to float free of it. Some episodes even take place at a distance from the city: aboard an oceanliner or on a distant uncharted island. In sum, the dispersed spatiality and non-iconic architectures of Tezuka's manga contrast sharply with Lang's film. Where Lang's Metropolis remained shut off from the world, intent on identifying and expunging the inner alien, Tezuka's Metropolis

opens to lands beyond the ocean (one of the main characters hails from Japan), to the other spots on the planet (events in the Metropolis affect the globe), and to even the heavens.

MICHI EMBODIES A MORE AMBIGUOUS AND AMBIVALENT RELATION TO MODERN TECHNOLOGY.

Just as the robot in Lang's film embodied the tension between labyrinth (otherness) and tower (self), the robot in Tezuka's manga embodies the dispersion of urban space. Where Lang presented two distinct versions of one body (Maria/Futura) in order to stage a conflict between true and false, good and evil, inorganic and organic, Tezuka's robot Michi is always in a position of being neither/nor and both/and. Grown from artificial cells, Michi oscillates between the inorganic and organic. Similarly Michi transforms from male to female at the flip of a switch. Neither good nor evil, he/she becomes violent only when provoked. In sum, Michi embodies a more ambiguous and ambivalent relation to modern technology. Even her identity remains in suspense. While constructed like the False Maria in the image of another, Michi is modeled on a work of art. He/she bears the face of the most beautiful statue in the world. Consequently, Michi does not



FIGURE 4. Michi flies through Tezuka's *Metropolis* (1949); note that in contrast to Figure 1, none of these tall buildings dominates the others. This robot moves through the manga city in swoops and swerves, in contrast to the frenetic movement of her counterpart in Lang's *Metropolis*. Copyright Tezuka Productions.

conceal a true identity. It is impossible to burn away her skin and flesh to reveal an underlying truth. When Michi dies at the end of the manga, he/she melts into a formless mass. Her death affords no final revelation (Figure 5).



FIGURE 5. Michi begins to dissolve at the climax of Tezuka's *Metropolis*. Copyright Tezuka Productions.

Consistent with the dispersion of urban space and the undecidable nature of the robot, Tezuka's manga offers no figure of legitimate political authority. Lang's film turns on the legitimacy of Joh Frederson, challenging his legitimacy only to reconfirm it in the end. Tezuka's story follows Duke Red's struggle to seize power, but Duke Red is clearly a criminal, without any legitimate authority. This lack of a political center is consistent with the unfocused spatial layout of the city. If there is any center to the story and to the city, it is one that acts at a great distance from the city and in an entirely different register from urban space: the sun.

Although Tezuka does not introduce the sun until page 22 of the manga, the entire plot revolves around its effects. The evil Duke Red's plans to take over the world depend on transforming the sun. He fires a super weapon at it to create sunspots that at once increase the temperature of the Earth and produce a form of radiation (omothenium rays) that allows for the production of life with artificial cells (Figure 6). The scientist Dr Lawton creates the artificial human Michi with the omothenium-irradiated artificial cells. Duke Red sees in Michi a tool to hasten his ascent to global domination. Michi escapes him, however, and in his/her anger, leads the robots in rebellion against the Metropolis.

It is easy to interpret Tezuka's open, decentered, unfocused, loose, ambiguous, and horizontal comic book *Metropolis* as a response to Japan's condition—both physical and political—at the end of the war. Largely leveled in the war, many of Japan's cities consisted of a patchwork of survival and ruin, demolition and reconstruction. The political condition was similar. Under the American occupation, Japan's government and economic institutions were to be restructured, with a new constitution in which the sovereign center, the emperor, renounced his divinity, becoming just a symbolic center. Until only four years prior to Tezuka's manga, official doctrine had posited the Emperor of Japan as the descendant of the sun goddess. It is telling, then, that Tezuka makes the sun central to his narrative, yet at the same time places it

at a distance, off to the side, and darkened. While the formerly legitimate political authority (sun) is displaced, and contemporary claimants to power are discredited as criminal (Duke Red), Tezuka's sun continues to exert a powerful and deleterious influence on the world, precisely because illegitimate politicians and criminals can manipulate it. Significantly, it is the politically and scientifically instrumental use of the sun/emperor in its displaced position that is the source of evil, rather than the sun itself.

In this respect, while it is tempting perhaps to read Duke Red, with his long legs and high nose, as a sign of the Western, Tezuka's manga is not a critique of the *Americanness* of the occupation, of foreign forces come to remodel Japan. Tezuka implicitly takes to task the criminal nature of the Japanese government under the American occupation, and also, perhaps accidentally, points to the repositioning of Japan in the Cold War. After all, this Duke is Red, and in 1949 it was already clear that Japan was America's front line in the war against communism. There was plenty of anxiety about the possibility of "reds" in Japan. All of which suggests that Michi, as the product of a transformative attack on the sun, is equally a product of the displaced



FIGURE 6. The radiation from Duke Red's sunspots provides the missing spark that brings Dr. Lawton's synthetic proteins to life: a form of life that oscillates between organic and artificial and with an intimate relationship to the sun. Copyright Tezuka Productions.

emperor, and United States' and the Soviet Union's "criminal" grab for power, both in postwar Japan and around the world. Michi's combination of innocence and total ambiguity speaks to the consequent decentering of sovereignty, not only in Japan but also the postwar world of the Pax Americana, in which questions of place and identity—"who?" and "where?"—threatened to become unanswerable.

In combining and drawing connections between Lang's *Metropolis* and Tezuka's, Rintarō and Ōtomo's animated *Metropolis* succeeds not only in constructing a vision of the contemporary global city that is grounded in prior formations but also in showing how the fascism of the 1930s could transform and adapt itself to the diffuse and open conditions of place and identity associated with information society and postmodernity. This is the version of *Metropolis* I will consider next.

THE TOWER OF THE SUN

Rintarō and Ōtomo's city is even more centralized than Lang's. At the center of their animated Metropolis stands a tower known as the Ziggurat, which implies that it is structurally a ziggurat and thus analogous to the biblical Tower of Babel. Yet within the language of the film's art-deco design scheme it is a cathedral: a cross in plan, topped by gargoyles, flanked by flying buttresses. The Tower/Cathedral forms a cross at the center of the city grid, and all roads lead from it and return to it. In sum, where Lang's film presented combinations of tower and labyrinth in two major architectural figures, one modern (the New Tower of Babel) and one "traditional" (the Cathedral), Rintarō and Ōtomo's animated film fuses the New Tower of Babel and the Cathedral into one structure: the Ziggurat (Figure 7). Such a fusion of structures might be read as a compression of figures of sovereignty, in the sense that the animated *Metropolis* combines the two symbols of sovereignty from Lang's film (one symbolizing power and the other, ostensibly, purity). It also implies, like Lang's cathedral, a distillation of identity. The animated film begins with newsreel footage of Duke Red atop the Ziggurat, announcing the approach or ascent of his nation to the heavens. This is pronounced in a language reminiscent of wartime (and contemporary) invocations of national pride, emphasizing a shared identity: an emphatic "we" and "our" (*"ware ware wa, waga"*), and a term for "nation" (*"kokka"*) derived from the Chinese characters for country and household.[16] So the Ziggurat brings sovereignty and identity into focus at a single point, in a sort of Tower of the Sun.

THE ZIGGURAT BRINGS SOVEREIGNTY AND IDENTITY INTO FOCUS AT A SINGLE POINT, IN A SORT OF TOWER OF THE SUN.

For it is here, at the center of the Metropolis, that Rintarō and Ōtomo place Tezuka's sun-polluting super weapon. This is a very different gesture from Tezuka, who had placed the weapon at a great distance from his city, paralleling the sun's own distance and ambiguity as a source of power and authority. While Tezuka had pushed the sun off to the side, the animated *Metropolis* recenters it within the city through the very weapon designed to attack it. In a similar departure from Tezuka, the animated film makes Duke Red not just a criminal but a public figure. At the beginning of the film he is wealthy and influential; he is responsible for the construction of the Ziggurat. And by the end of the film he has actually provoked a coup d'état and violently taken control of the city. He thus differs from Joh Frederson, whose legitimacy is ultimately upheld, and from Tezuka's Duke Red, who falls without ever achieving political legitimacy. In effect, the Tower of the Sun allows for a structural blurring of the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate sovereignty.

The animated *Metropolis* also has labyrinthine subterranean zones reminiscent of those in Lang's film, and a divide between the city above ground



FIGURE 7. Lang's two dominant buildings, the New Tower of Babel and the Cathedral, are merged together to form the Ziggurat in Rintarō and Ōtomo Katsuhiro's animated *Metropolis* (2001).

and zones below ground was essential to Rintarō and Ōtomo's vision of the Metropolis from the outset.[17] This underground is also home to the most abject of city dwellers: unemployed or impoverished humans, and robots. Yet, unlike the austere, featureless architectures of Lang's underground spaces, the subterranean world of the animated *Metropolis* bursts with color. Its denizens are poor and live in shanties, but these shantytowns are ablaze with activity (some of it black market or criminal), crowded with markets, food stands, bars. Instead of the dark pockets of otherness found in Lang's film, Rintarō and Ōtomo create a collage of heterogeneous elements. Examples of architecture from around the world and from a vast range of historical periods crowd into one space. We see citations of classical architecture, industrial architecture, nineteenth-century arcades, Gaudi, and Peter Eisenman. This colorful architectural collage answers to the fusion and compression of architectures in the Ziggurat, with a kaleidoscopic and chaotic superimposition of elements that refuses to constitute a single space (Figure 8). If the Ziggurat compresses sovereignty and identity into a single-minded "we!" and proudly proclaims "here!" in response the animated labyrinth continually asks "where?" and "who?" Who are we in this collage of wheres?

One of the main characters, Ban Shunsaku, a detective from Japan (adapted from Tezuka's manga), speaks of his sense of disorientation, "I'm such a stranger here, I don't know East from West!" ("*machi wa hajimete de, higashi mo nishi mo kaimoku*" and "*higashi mo nishi mo shiran tokoro de*").[18] In this respect, too, the animated Metropolis is as open and dispersed as Tezuka's.



FIGURE 8. Unlike the narrow, twisting, and empty tunnels beneath Lang's city, the animated Metropolis is a collage of spaces grand and small, old and new, colorful and dark—and inhabited.

RINTARŌ AND ŌTOMO ACHIEVE WHAT LANG AND TEZUKA IMAGINED BUT DEFERRED: THE FALL OF BABEL, THE WORLD AFTER THE APOCALYPSE.

Yet rather than discrediting sovereignty or criminalizing it, the indeterminacy of Rintarō and Ōtomo's underground city invites the arbitrary exercise of sovereign power, in the form of a rigorous zoning and policing of zones. Paradoxically, the underground zones are strictly controlled, yet we are told that laws do not apply there. These are exactly what Giorgio Agamben calls "spaces of exception," wherein the law creates zones where the law does not apply. The underground is legally unlawful. The result is a constant state of emergency. Those who inhabit these zones are "bare life" or "naked life," subject to authority that legally places them outside the law, which is in this case symbolized in the highly compressed architectural authority of the Ziggurat.[19]

The robot Tima in the animated *Metropolis* emerges from this labyrinth, as does Futura or the False Maria in Lang's film. But where Futura embodied the otherness concealed within identity (the dark side to be eradicated), Tima is a thoroughly hybrid figure. She is both the true and the false Maria, as it were. While the animated *Metropolis* makes the robot definitely female (in contrast to Tezuka's gender-switching Michi), Tima is nonetheless as hybrid a figure as Michi, who remained poised between inorganic and organic, true and false, good and evil. She seems capable of adopting any identity, and not surprisingly, her tag line in the film is "Who am I?" She is an embodiment of bare life.

If Tima has a truth, it is that she has been designed as the final piece in the weapon that will launch a strike on the sun. Duke Red aims to sit her atop the Ziggurat as the new ruler of his world. In other words, what emerges from the labyrinth (bare life) is taken for the rule of sovereignty. The exception is to become the rule. Yet things do not turn out as Duke Red planned. In keeping with its doubling of the silent film and the manga, this *Metropolis* gives us not one but two revolutions or rebellions. The first rebellion, on the part of human revolutionaries, proves unsuccessful. Despite its earnestness and good intentions, it is an entirely conservative revolution, with the goal of overturning Duke Red and returning the city to a time before robots. Indeed the failure of this revolution appears as a warning against conservative revolution and thus as a critique of the complicity between Lang's film and national socialism. Consequently, there must be a second uprising, that of robots, the figures of bare life.

The second uprising occurs when Duke Red is about to succeed in his plan to sit Tima (the robotic emblem of bare life) upon a throne atop the Ziggurat.

As she loses her "human" nature and becomes one with the machine, the robots rise against this ultimate injustice, that is, the transformation of their state of exception into the new law for world order. Thus the Tower falls, destroyed by the very bare life whose state of exception allowed its emergence, and the film ends with humans and robots poking through the now horizontal ruins of the Ziggurat, in a search for Tima's remains. In effect, Rintarō and Ōtomo achieve what Lang and Tezuka imagined but deferred: the fall of Babel, the world after the apocalypse.

Near the end of the film an immense red globe raises up Tima's throne, an image that evokes the red disk of the sun on the Japanese flag, the *hi no maru.* For an instant, something like Japan appears in the place of absolute sovereignty (Duke Red) and bare life (Tima)—a place for Japan unimaginable in Tezuka's manga but also a place that Rintarō and Ōtomo are intent on rejecting or at least questioning. Their robot, designed to attack the sun, becomes equated with it. Tima becomes (the film tells us) a goddess, if only briefly: new life and pure violence pouring forth together. Such a condition, which is somehow our condition, cannot endure. As she fulfills this condition, Tima brings it to a crisis, immediately provoking its destruction—and her own.

Through this gesture she frees the people of the Labyrinth: both robots and the poorest humans are in effect led to a new land devoid of power structures. But as she falls from the collapsing Ziggurat she again repeats her tagline "Who am I?" (Figure 9). Who does she save through her death? Who are her people, really, and where is her city? An answer can be found, I think, if

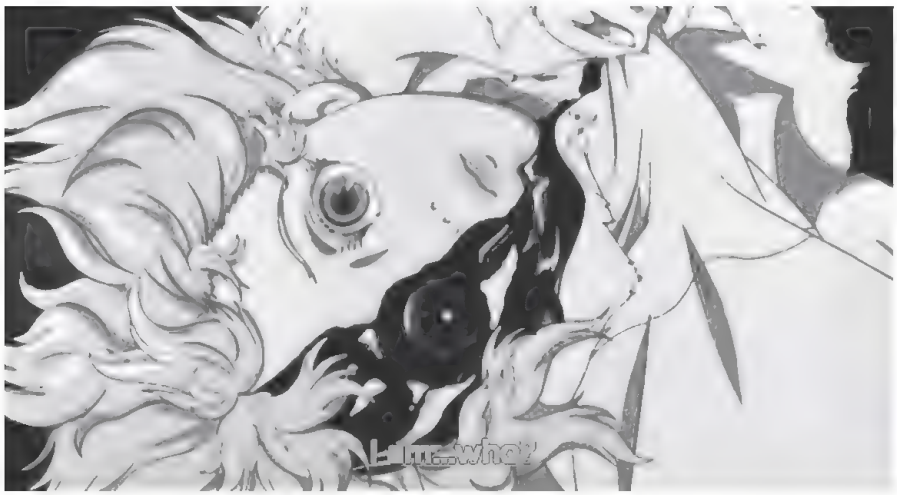


FIGURE 9. As Tima disintegrates and falls at the climax of the animated *Metropolis,* the question of identity is posed yet again.

we explore some of the connections between the architectural spaces of the animated *Metropolis* and those of contemporary Japan.

OUR METROPOLIS

One building in Tokyo in particular assimilates closely to Rintarō and Ōtomo's Ziggurat. It is one of the most notorious buildings in Japan: the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Headquarters, or Tokyo City Hall, designed by Tange Kenzō (completed 1991).[20] This building was conceived as a center of power and technocracy, part of the largest single set of buildings to be constructed in Japan in the twentieth century. It was designed to evoke the imposing authority of traditional architectures—castles and Edo-era government buildings—and the lattice-like pattern of a computer circuit board. Its most prominent building, City Hall Tower 1, was also immediately noted (and disparaged) for its resemblance to the building at the heart of Paris—the gothic cathedral Notre Dame de Paris.[21] So, in a building that itself can be considered parodic—it would be classified by many as a piece of postmodern architecture—we find a literal fusion of control Tower and Cathedral (Figure 10).



FIGURE 10. City Hall Tower 1 of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Headquarters (Tange Kenzō, 1991). Photograph by the author.

Today this building is occupied by the administration of governor Ishihara Shintarō, who has been criticized for his extreme nationalism and for statements many have considered racist, sexist, and historically revisionist, including a speech that called for the Japanese army to be prepared to put down hordes of rioting foreign residents of Japan in the event of a major earthquake.[22] The foreigners Ishihara was speaking about occupy an economic niche in Japan that makes them like the robots in *Metropolis*: essential laborers who barely exist socially and politically and yet whose very existence provokes resentment and fear. It is in response to their existence that the right wing has attempted to answer the question of identity: "Who are we

Japanese? We are not those Asian foreigners. We are we." Such conceptions of national identity might be considered to turn this Ziggurat into a monument to the Japanese sun, embodied bizarrely in a cathedral like Rintarō's—and Lang's.[23]

But Tokyo's relationship to national identity is complex. Indeed one of the reasons for building such an ostentatious city hall was to underline Tokyo's autonomy from the national government. Tokyo's boundaries really lie outside of Japan, in the many countries from which it draws its resources. It is one of those metropolises referred to by economists and sociologists as "global cities."[24] Like other global cities, Tokyo is a crucial node in the supranational flows of capital, information, and technology that link subnational regions, provoking a crisis in what it means to be situated locally, to be a nation.[25]

The identities of all citizens become a problem in this condition. And so we long for a time when we were whole, our bodies intact; or a time when we were part of one body, one folk. Leaders like Ishihara Shintarō appeal to precisely this longing. Yet their rhetoric disguises the fact that they—and we—depend on those lives that are reduced to a subhuman condition by the exercise of our power. These are the millions of people, sometimes entire populaces, we employ or enslave daily to die for us: foreign guest workers, occupants of refugee camps, captives of all kinds.

"WHO ARE WE JAPANESE? WE ARE NOT THOSE ASIAN FOREIGNERS. WE ARE WE."

This is the condition described in Rintarō and Ōtomo's *Metropolis*. In it a new form of fascism—articulated in an architecture derived from Lang—combines with the diffuse and open conditions of place and identity of our own era—conditions that find expression in a loose urban structure derived from Tezuka's city. While these conditions have their roots in the past, they take on a new accent now because of the decline of the two Cold War empires, the expansion of the information society, and the other complex circumstances that go together to make up what is often described as "postmodernity." In this condition the questions of "Who are we?" and "Where are we?" become acute. The nationalist or culturalist rhetoric that responds to this anxiety divides the world into two camps: those who are with us and those who are not. The result is, as in Japan, leaders with global power but only local legitimacy. Criminals and pretenders can, like Duke Red, actually achieve positions as global sovereigns.

This is an ironic outcome, given that some hoped that the new decentralization might yield a revolution from below. But many writers and artists

of Rintarō's and Ōtomo's generation were among those who tried to reform Japan in the early postwar period, only to see it swing increasingly to the Right, and much of their work now seems to be imbued with a pessimistic belief that revolution from below is no longer possible. This may be the source of the animated film's dependence on an apocalypse provoked from above. Tima's robot revolution succeeds where a human revolution failed. At the same time, it promises liberation from rogues like Duke Red, a world in which all power structures have been leveled and from which we can begin to pull together the pieces that make up some kind of bare life. The hope is that this life will offer sovereignty on a small scale, a sovereignty of individuals or of small communities that, while distinct, can accommodate relationships between people, or even between humans and robots.

This is not a new dream. Walter Benjamin, who wrote under the shadow of Hitler's fascism, hoped for a messianic or divine violence, as opposed to the bloody mythic one he saw tearing apart his world.[26] Divine violence was to annihilate the very notion of sovereignty, leveling all power structures. But it is unclear today, as it was in Benjamin's time, what might be the end condition that comes out of this divine violence. What form would a community dwelling together in the world take after the destruction of Towers? For the yearning for a postpolitical world is also shared by the representatives of the Right against which this film reacts. An apolitical condition can in the end turn out to be about pure power, whether that power is expressed through violence or love. The postapocalypse may turn out to be just another state of emergency.

But at least Rintarō's film does not restore the sovereign, as Lang's did. Tima becomes a goddess and then immediately cancels out her own sovereignty. And while Lang's *Metropolis* papered over the hybrid condition of modernity through the sacrifice of a robot in place of the city, Tima's death occurs *alongside* the destruction of the city and confirms our own hybrid condition. Instead of an answer to the question "Who am I?" the animated film leaves us with the question unanswered. Rather than one united folk, the ruins of the animated Ziggurat are populated by bands of robots and humans, two communities. With the fall of Babel, many tongues replace one, and one story becomes two. And just as the later retellings of the Babel and Metropolis stories restore and distort their antecedents, so we humans' second identity, Tima, both turns on us *and* saves us. If there is some hope to be read in the shared destruction of body and city, this is it. Whether it is enough, whether the film as destructive creation can possibly contribute to a creation born out of destruction in the real world, is another question.

Notes

1. See, for example, Murakami Takashi, "Earth in My Window," trans. Linda Hoaglund, and Sawaragi Noi, "On the Battlefield of 'Superflat': Subculture and Art in Postwar Japan," both in *Little Boy: The Arts of Japan's Exploding Subculture,* ed. Murakami Takashi (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005). For an opposing position, see Thomas Lamarre, "*Torauma kara umarete: Akira to shihonshugi teki na hakai yōshiki*" (Born of trauma: *Akira* and the capitalist mode of destruction), *Shingenjitsu* 4 (April 2007): 29–58.

2. Tezuka Osamu, "atogaki" (postscript), *Metoroporisu* (*Metropolis*) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1979).

3. Siegfried Krackauer, *From Caligari to Hitler* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004).

4. This is made clear in the 1926 novel by Thea von Harbou, *Metropolis* (Boston: Gregg Press, 1975). The robot's primary purpose as laborer is implied but not explicit in the film.

5. Including the most recent and most complete restoration of the film: *Metropolis,* dir. Fritz Lang (1927); restored and released on DVD (Kino Video, 2002). My analysis is based on this version of the film.

6. In 1924 Fritz Lang visited New York City for the first time, in the company of his wife and scriptwriter Thea von Harbou, and famed architect Erich Mendelsohn. It was on the first evening of this journey, looking across the water at Manhattan from the ship where he and his companions were still confined (as, in his words, "enemy aliens"), that he conceived *Metropolis.* Jean-Louis Cohen, *Scenes of the World to Come* (Paris and Montréal: Flammarion and Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1995), 87.

7. Dietrich Neumann, "Before and after *Metropolis*: Film and Architecture in Search of the Modern City," in *Film Architecture: Set Designs from "Metropolis" to "Bladerunner,"* ed. Dietrich Neumann (Munich: Prestel, 1996), 35.

8. This is implied in the film in its best-restored version today, but even in this version approximately one quarter of the original film has disappeared (it was edited out in part for American distribution). The vertical axis of movement tying together the New Tower of Babel and the machine rooms below is made explicit in von Harbou's novel *Metropolis.* The novel, written while the screenplay was being developed, describes the Paternoster Machine (an early elevator), which ascends and descends within the New Tower and connects through to the control mechanism in the depths below to which Freder Frederson is bound at one point in the story. In the film this control mechanism takes the form of a giant clocklike disk. In the novel Freder is attached instead to an insectoid machine with a trunklike sucker that "jacks in" (to borrow a phrase anachronistically from cyberpunk) to his head. In the novel this device is referred to as the "Ganesh machine" (see the following discussion on oriental imagery in Lang). A few surviving stills show the Paternoster Machine in action as it appeared in the original film.

9. Lang would have been aware of this because of his training in architecture, which he studied for one year before switching to film.

10. Since Goethe, the Gothic had been seen as a quintessentially German style of architecture, and the Gothic cathedral as the epitome of German culture. Of course Gothic architecture was a pan-European phenomenon. There were, though, local variations of

Gothic, and in the modern era recognition of these became important to the construction of a national identity in opposition to the international, even abstract, tone of classical architecture. Victor Hugo, for example, suggested in his great novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* (originally published in 1831; English title *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame,*) that the Gothic, epitomized for him by the cathedral at the heart of Paris, was quintessentially French. In England, to give another example, one reason that Sir Charles Barry designed the British Houses of Parliament (begun 1836) as Gothic buildings was because it was seen as the most British of styles.

11. Thousands of such buildings were designed as projects in the 1920s, including Otto Kohlz's federal office building in Berlin and Haimovici, Tshcammer, and Caroli's trade fair tower in Leipzig (both 1920). Neumann, *Film Architecture,* 35–36 and 102.

12. This is speculation, but the full text does support it strongly. Here is one excerpt: "In the middle of this turmoil of the metropolis the Gedächniskirche stretches its narrow steeples up into the grey evening. It is alien in this noisy life. Like an anachronism left behind, it mourns between the cafés and cabarets, condescends to the automobiles humming around its stony body, and calmly announces the hour to the sin of corruption . . . This is not the true Berlin. It is elsewhere waiting, hoping, struggling. It is beginning to recognize the Judas who is selling our people for thirty pieces of silver. / The other Berlin is lurking, ready to pounce. A few thousand are working days and nights on end so that sometime the day will arrive. And this day will demolish the abodes of corruption all around the Gedächtniskirche; it will transform them and give them over to a risen people. / The day of judgment! It will be a day of freedom!" Joseph Goebbels, "Around the Gedächtniskirche," in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook,* ed. Anton Kaes and Edward Dimendberg (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994; first published as "Rund um die Gedächtniskirche," in *Der Angriff,* January 23, 1928).

13. William Friedkin, "Conversation with Fritz Lang," supplementary material on *M,* dir. Fritz Lang (1931); restored and released on DVD (Criterion Collection, 2004).

14. "And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there . . . And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven" (Gen. 11:2–8; King James version).

15. Asian *and* pestilential: "There was a house in the great Metropolis which was older than the town . . . It was said that a magician, who came from the East (and in the track of whom the plague wandered) had built the house in seven nights" (Gen. 11:55).

16. The text is "*Ima, ware ware wa, waga kokka wa masa ni tenjō ni itaran to shite iru.*" Ōtomo Katsuhiro, *Metoroporisu* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 2001), 1. This is rendered in subtitles on the DVD *Metoroporisu,* dir. Rintarō (2001); translated as *Metropolis,* subtitled DVD (Columbia Tristar, 2002), as "At this moment our state extends its reach to the stars!" or "presently, we, as a nation, are about to touch the heavens!"

17. "Ōtomo Katsuhiro x Rintarō: The Making of *Metropolis,*" interview in Ōtomo, *Metoroporisu,* 114.

18. Ōtomo, *Metoroporisu,* 10, 58. This sense of disorientation dominates not only in the spaces of the film, but the plot as well: the Japanese detective's pursuit of a criminal is sidetracked by other chases and intrigues, while Duke Red launches his coup d'état, and an insurrection is crushed as soon as it arises. In other words, there is an abundance of action, much of it political action, yet all of it seems misdirected, as if unable to arrive at

a full articulation of who should act and where. What is more, much of the action goes astray because concealed identities and indeterminate identities constantly undermine any sense of certainty.

19. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life,* trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998); and *State of Exception,* trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

20. Tange was also architect of a building erected at the opposite end of Japan's postwar expansion and associated with another apocalyptic explosion: Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Museum (1952). That building is a profoundly horizontal gesture—see discussion of Tezuka's diffuse and horizontal city above. Images are available at Kenzo Tange Associates Official Site, http://www.ktaweb.com (accessed June 14, 2007).

21. William Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority in Japan* (London: Routledge, 1996), 258–81.

22. "With Sangokujin and foreigners repeating serious crimes, we should prepare ourselves for possible riots that may be instigated by them at the outbreak of an earthquake . . . As police [are] not always fit for handling all contingencies, the Self-Defense forces should be ready to respond to threats to public security besides natural disasters." Cited on the Web site of the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR), http://www.imadr.org/new/ishihara1.html (accessed March 23, 2007)

23. Ishihara is also one of Japan's most prominent writers. His work includes several screenplays, including the recent *For Those We Love* (2007, *Ore wa kimi no tame ni koso shini ni iku*; the title has also been translated as "I go to die for you"). According to Ishihara, his intention in writing this script was "to convey the [kamikaze] corps' beauty to young people today" (quoted in Kim Do-hyeong, "The Kamikaze in Japanese and International Film," *Japan Focus* [May 28, 2007], http://japanfocus.org/products/details/2431 [accessed May 28, 2007]). In 2007 Ishihara was reelected for a third term as governor of Tokyo. As though to underline the relationship between film and architecture that seems to emerge again and again from these films and the events that surround them, one of his opponents in the election was Kurokawa Kishō, prominent architect and member of the 1960s architectural group known as the Metabolists. Kurokawa opposed Ishihara mainly because of a conviction that the governor's promotion of Tokyo's bid for the 2016 Olympics was misguided. The Olympic bid, as Olympic bids tend to do, engaged a rhetoric of equal parts national(ist) and civic pride, both to be crystallized in the form of grand architectural projects (the master planner was to be Andō Tadao, another prominent architect). Additional information can be found at the Tokyo 2016 Olympic Games Bid Committee Web site, http://www.tokyo2016.or.jp/en/index.html (accessed June 14, 2007).

24. Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

25. These flows are predicated on a culture of consumption that finds some of its purest expressions in spaces in Japan not far from Tokyo City Hall, the entertainment district around Shinjuku station. Such spaces (there are many others) might well be compared to the Labyrinth of the animated *Metropolis*: playful, phantasmagoric collages fueled by a commerce of bare life both legitimate and not.

26. Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," in *Reflections,* ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), 297.

SHARALYN ORBAUGH

Emotional Infectivity: Cyborg Affect and the Limits of the Human

If it is true that our gods and our hopes are no longer anything but scientific, is there any reason why our love should not also be so?

—Villiers de l'Isle-Adam

The epigraph is from the 1886 novel *L'Ève future* (Future Eve) by novelist, playwright, and poet Jean Marie Mathias Phillipe Auguste, comte de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam (1838–1889; hereafter, Villiers). I have highlighted it here because anime director Oshii Mamoru (b. 1951) also chose it as the epigraph for his 2004 film *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* (hereafter *Innocence*).[1] It is the connections and disjunctures between emotion and science that lie at the heart of Villiers's novel and Oshii's film. For both, a central question is, can an android love and be loved? Or, to put the emphasis differently, is love possible only for humans, or are emotions and affect also possible in artificial beings? Oshii's film suggests that the emotion that remains in a cyborg or android context is precisely what will keep us "human" even after our bodies have become mostly or entirely artificial. In this study I will use Oshii's source text, *L'Ève future,* as well as contemporary affect theory in a preliminary exploration of the philosophical and ontological issues depicted so provocatively in Oshii's film.[2]

IS LOVE POSSIBLE ONLY FOR HUMANS, OR ARE EMOTIONS AND AFFECT ALSO POSSIBLE IN ARTIFICIAL BEINGS?

It is clear that Villiers's *L'Ève future,* far beyond providing a single sentence for the film's epigraph, is a source text for *Innocence.* The novel, which has been called "the exemplary forerunner of the cinematic representation of the mechanical woman,"[3] features a fictionalized Thomas Alva Edison as its protagonist and is set in Edison's laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey, in 1883–84.[4] The plot is relatively simple. Edison has invented a perfect mechanical woman and decides to give her to his young friend and benefactor, Lord Celian Ewald, who has been mortally disappointed by the crassness of his beautiful mistress, Alicia Clary, and has resolved on suicide. Edison's "andreid" (Villiers's neologism for an artificial creature, the origin for our current word "android") is called Hadaly, meaning "ideal" in Persian.[5] Edison reshapes Hadaly to be an exact replica of Ewald's mistress in every respect except character: while the flesh-and-blood Alicia has no soul deserving of the name, and is therefore incapable of loving and unworthy of being loved, Hadaly has a "mind"/"soul" fully worthy of Ewald's love and, Ewald comes to believe, capable of loving him in return. On meeting the completed andreid, Ewald is quickly convinced that she is his ideal woman and resolves to take her back to England where they will dwell in romantic ecstasy until his eventual death (at which time he is to destroy Hadaly, too, Edison instructs him). The novel ends as Edison receives news that the ship carrying Ewald, Alicia, and Hadaly across the Atlantic has caught fire and sunk, drowning Alicia, bearing Hadaly to the bottom of the sea, and leaving Ewald alive to mourn his irrecoverable love.

The original inspiration for Edison's invention of Hadaly had come from the tragic story of his friend Edward Anderson, who, ensnared by the wiles of the seductive dancer Evelyn Habal, had abandoned his wife and family, and eventually committed suicide after sinking into a life of sexual depravity. Edison has befriended Anderson's widow, Any *(sic)*, who now uses what seem to be telepathic powers to aid him in his work. (When acting as a telepathic medium, Any Anderson goes by the name Sowana.) It is to prevent such tragedies in the future that Edison has created his Hadaly, and he sees the perfect opportunity to put his invention to use when he hears of Lord Ewald's desperate situation: Alicia Clary is a virulent femme fatale just as Evelyn Habal was, and Lord Ewald can be saved only by transferring his love to a pure, ideal "woman" such as Hadaly.

Although the plot of *L'Ève future* is quite simple, much of the narrative is consumed in complex explanation of the "science" behind Hadaly's construc-

"LORD EWALD'S FINAL DOUBTS ABOUT THE MECHANICAL NATURE OF WHAT SEEMED TO HIM A LIVING WOMAN ARE DISPELLED IN A HORRIBLE RECOGNITION OF THE COMPATIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND DESIRE."

tion, and the elaborate philosophical debate between Ewald and Edison over the possibility of creating a being who, although entirely artificial, nonetheless can possess a sense of self and can experience and inspire emotions.

In the process of persuading Ewald to accept the gift of the andreid, Edison must convince him that an artificial life form can be worth loving. The inventor reveals every aspect of her composition to Ewald, opening Hadaly up to show him the wires, motors, inductors, and miniature phonographs that constitute her "organs." This scene is most significant, given the mainstream modernist conceptualization of the origin of human affect, the foundation of "selfhood."

According to this conceptualization (which is still one of the dominant ways of understanding affect), selfhood is predicated on a carefully maintained distinction between the outside (of the person) and the inside, a distinction materialized in/through the structure of the human body.[6] The body is conceived as being self-contained, autonomous, with the skin serving as its outer boundary—both holding in the person's "insides" and preventing (or at least hindering) the invasion of elements from the outside. The somatosensory organs on the surface of the body—eyes, ears, skin, and so on—allow for impressions from the outside world to enter the body as data. Similarly, the skin may register on its surface information about a person's internal affective state—a blush of shame, for example—which can be read by an observer. *Communication* between outside and inside is thus possible: the boundaries of the body act as gatekeepers for the movement of *information* (conceived here as nonmaterial) from exterior to interior or vice versa, but those boundaries are not physically violated in the process. Moreover, a person's emotions and attitudes are believed to arise from the mind, soul, or heart—or, in scientific discourse, from the neurophysiology of the tissues, fluids, and electrical charges—that make up the person's/body's "insides" and create a sense of "interiority."[7] "Affect" then, in this conceptualization, refers to the emotions that arise from and are felt within human interiority, and also to how information about those emotions is conveyed at the body's surface, allowing others to "read" them and respond.

In the scene described above, therefore, Ewald is forced by the inventor to see and acknowledge the entirely artificial, mechanical nature of Hadaly's interior and therefore to question how her internal machines could possibly

give rise to, or even simply house, genuine affect. To his surprise, however, this does not dissuade him from pursuing the project. Mary Ann Doane describes the young man's reaction: "Lord Ewald's final doubts about the mechanical nature of what seemed to him a living woman are dispelled in a horrible recognition of the compatibility of technology and desire."[8] Villiers's version of this scene is more florid, in keeping with nineteenth-century French decadent style: "Now he found himself face to face with a marvel the obvious possibilities of which, as they transcend even the imaginary, dazzled his understanding and made him suddenly feel to what lengths a man who wishes can extend the courage of his desires."[9] By the end of the novel, Lord Ewald has managed to extend the courage of his desires to the point of accepting and loving an artificial woman, and feeling himself loved by her in return.

Readers familiar with *Innocence* will recognize several similarities of plot and theme between the film and *L'Ève future,* most immediately the protagonist's love and longing for a woman who is entirely nonorganic and who appears to be entirely lost to him. One major difference between the two is that in *L'Ève future* Ewald does not lose Hadaly until the end of the novel (shortly after he has acquired her), whereas in *Innocence* the protagonist's lost love is absent from the beginning of the film, and actually returns briefly at the end.

Like *L'Ève future,* the plot of *Innocence* is fairly simple, but much of the film's narrative space is taken up with philosophical conversations about the nature of human and cyborg (and postcyborg, in the case of one character) subjectivity.

The mechanical uncanny represented in *Innocence* comes in a much wider variety than *L'Ève future*'s single andreid. In the film we see various kinds of *ningyō* (meaning "dolls," but literally "human-shaped"): crude rag dolls; lifelike but immobile toy dolls; *karakuri ningyō* (playful automata from the Japan's eighteenth and nineteenth centuries); jerky and crude automata that contain some element of human intelligence; huge mechanical figures of animals and demons; and sophisticated androids with no organic parts but a sort of artificial "ghost," giving them a sense of self. We encounter the members of special security unit Division Nine, familiar from the earlier *Ghost in the Shell* narratives:[10] the completely organic Aramaki, Head of the Division; near-organic humans such as Togusa, whose only cybernetic component is the interface holes in the back of his neck that connect his brain to the Net; partial cyborgs, whose organic bodies incorporate a prosthesis or two; and complete cyborgs such as our protagonist, Batō, who has so many artificial body parts that, after he loses his flesh-and-blood arm in the middle of the film and has it replaced with a prosthesis, his brain may be his only remaining

original organic feature. (In this he is like Major Kusanagi Motoko, protagonist of the previous film, *Ghost in the Shell*.) If we include the absent Kusanagi, now presumably a completely disembodied, cybernetic life form, we see in *Innocence* a wide range of posthuman entities.[11]

Ghost in the Shell depicted the subjectivity of the cyborg, a hybrid creature that incorporates both mechanical and organic parts. From the credit sequence early in the film, in which we follow the process of replicating (for the first or hundredth time) the protagonist, Kusanagi Motoko, we learn that she is completely mechanical/artificial except for some of her original brain matter, encased in a titanium skull. The implication is that it is because of the retention of this brain matter that Kusanagi also retains a "ghost"—that is, a sense of human selfhood that gives rise to intuition and emotion, affective promptings that cannot be accounted for logically.[12] But Kusanagi questions both the authenticity of her own "ghost"—she wonders whether her memory and emotions have been implanted by the same company that manufactured her body—and whether that original "ghost" is the sole origin of her current sense of self:

> Of course we have the right to resign from Section Nine, if we discreetly hand over these artificial bodies and part of our memories. But as many elements as there are that make us human, there are just as many that make



FIGURE 1. Three levels of posthuman entities coexisting in *Innocence*. From *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*, directed by Oshii Mamoru. Dreamworks Home Entertainment, 2004.

> up a self. The face that sets you apart from others, the unconscious sound of your own voice, the hand you stare at on waking up. . . . Not just that: the information and the network I can access with my electronic brain, all of this is a part of me, producing the consciousness I call myself, and at the same time setting limits on that self.[13]

Christopher Bolton cites this passage to underscore Kusanagi's recognition that her selfhood transcends her embodiment, but I think it can equally represent her recognition that her current body—despite being entirely artificial—contributes in fundamental ways to that sense of self; her organic brain is not the sole source of her selfhood. But, by the end of the film, after merging with a cybernetic (and thus completely bodiless) life form called the Puppet Master, Kusanagi prepares to abandon both her artificial body and her organic brain, to take up life as both herself and her offspring, capable of traveling the Net freely as a disembodied data stream. As Kusanagi bids him farewell in the final scene, Batō, whose love for her has been gently suggested throughout the film, is left to wonder whether, when, how, and in what form she may ever reappear to him.

Given the nature of the medium, film requires a *visible* protagonist.[14] Those of us anxiously awaiting the sequel to *Ghost in the Shell* therefore wondered how Kusanagi could be depicted in her disembodied form. The answer is that Batō, rather than Kusanagi, becomes the protagonist of *Innocence,* and its thematic focus shifts from posthuman reproduction—a matter of the body—to posthuman love—a matter of affect. While both films raise questions about what is necessary to produce (post)human selfhood and emotions (do they require "genuine" organic material? do they require a body?), *Innocence* explores them in a context where the body is in some cases no longer an organic/mechanical hybrid (cyborg) but rather is completely absent. This is another way in which Villiers's novel can be seen as a major inspiration for *Innocence.* The cutting-edge technology used by Edison in Hadaly's construction—the phonograph, the telephone, and even the cinema (which did not yet exist)—are icons of presence-in-absence, "transporting the trace of the [absent] other."[15] As we shall see, Oshii similarly uses contemporary (and not yet existing) technologies to show how Kusanagi can still be conceived of as "present."

The plot of *Innocence* takes the form of a detective story, involving the murder of a number of prominent Japanese men by their sex-toy "gynoids" (female-shaped androids). Division Nine is called in to investigate the crimes and, as the film opens, Batō is called to a crime scene. The regular (noncyborg)

police are grouped at the entrance to a dark, narrow alleyway. Inside, they tell him, are two dead police officers and their murderer, a gynoid who had earlier also killed her male owner. Batō enters the alley alone and confronts the evil android. She looks young and sweet, but she attacks him viciously. When she sees that she cannot kill him, she whispers "*tasukete, tasukete*" (help me, help me) in a childish voice as she rips her own chest open. Batō then blows her away.

Batō and his new partner Togusa (who was Kusanagi's partner in the previous film) learn that a number of gynoids identical to this one have recently murdered their owners and then committed "suicide." Purchased as sex toys, the gynoids are programmed to love and sexually serve male humans; the aberrant violence of one particular model, called "Hadaly," is a mystery to the company that manufactures them. They should not be able to kill humans, nor should they have any desire to commit suicide, since they should have no real sense of self. Nonetheless, this model has somehow acquired the ability to override the basic ethical programming common to all robots.[16] Batō and Togusa spend the rest of the film trying to discover how the gynoids have acquired their faulty programming—is it the work of a terrorist hacker, for example, targeting prominent men? Is it the work of a *yakuza* organization? Is it the fault of a computer virus? Or is it a bug intentionally built into the system by the corporation Rokusu Sorusu (Locus Solus),[17] that manufactured the gynoids? After following clues throughout Tokyo and a "special economic zone" on Etorofu Island, Batō finally infiltrates the corporation's secret offshore factory, where Chinese-speaking androids sound the alarm. Hundreds of naked gynoids, identical to the sweet-featured young girl he met earlier in the dark alley, drop from the ceilings and rise from the floors to kill him. Although his weapons are enough to wipe out most of the robots, it becomes clear that they will eventually overwhelm him—until, suddenly, one of them grabs a weapon and starts fighting on his side. It is, of course, his lost love, Major Kusanagi, who has downloaded herself into one of the gynoid bodies to help him. Together they subdue all the remaining gynoids and go to track down the source of the programming bug.

They find a young girl, about eight years old, strapped inside a large metallic device that connects her to hundreds of other devices holding partially completed gynoids. The company has been using trafficked children in an illegal procedure called "ghost-dubbing," transferring their "ghosts" to gynoids to animate them. (The procedure is illegal because, although it does endow androids with a crude version of a ghost, or soul, it eventually destroys the mind of the human original.) When Batō finds the girl she is whispering

"*tasukete, tasukete*" (help me, help me) over and over, just as the suicidal gynoid had done. When the little girl is completely clear of the machine she explains that she had been assured by a Locus Solus employee, Volkerson, that she would be rescued because he had modified the gynoids' ethical programming to allow them to do bad things. Appalled, Batō asks if Volkerson had had no thought for the victims that would result, both human and gynoid. She responds with childish petulance: "*datte watashi wa ningyō ni naritakunakattan da mono*" (but I didn't want to be made into dolls). Kusanagi, still in the body of a gynoid, comments that if the gynoid dolls had had their own voices they would have screamed out that they did not want to become human. After this Kusanagi leaves, telling Batō that every time he accesses the Net, she is there beside him. The abandoned gynoid body she had occupied crumples to the floor.

Let me return to Villiers's *L'Ève future*. Despite protagonist Edison's claims throughout most of the novel that Hadaly is purely a creature of science, author Villiers is not prepared to endorse such a reductionist view.[18] The reader eventually discovers that the heartbroken widow Any (Sowana) Anderson, whose husband had abandoned her for the false temptress Evelyn Habal, uses her extrasensory powers to somehow fuse with the mechanical Hadaly,



FIGURE 2. "But I didn't want to be made into dolls." From *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*, directed by Oshii Mamoru. Dreamworks Home Entertainment, 2004.

thus imparting to the andreid a soul. This is Villiers's nineteenth-century, decidedly unscientific version of "ghost-dubbing." In the case of *L'Ève future* the "dubbing" is voluntarily performed, although Any/Sowana actually dies once she has accomplished the awakening of Hadaly's soul.[19] The widow is willing to cooperate with Edison because of his motive for creating the perfect artificial woman: "Far from being hostile to the love of men for their wives—who are so necessary to perpetuate the race (at least until a new order of things comes in), I propose to reinforce, ensure, and guarantee that love. I will do so with the aid of *thousands and thousands of marvelous and completely innocent facsimiles,* who will render wholly superfluous all those beautiful but deceptive mistresses, ineffective henceforth forever" (emphasis added).[20]

Edison's stress on the infinite replicability and "complete innocence" of his envisioned cyborg army of women is savagely parodied in Oshii's film. The "thousands and thousands" of sweet-looking gynoids are created for the purpose of satisfying men's lust, and are made to look young and innocent to enhance that effect. The fact that, like Edison's ideal Hadaly, these artificial women have acquired self-consciousness, emotion, and judgment is ironically what causes them to enact the horrific violence that drives the film's plot.



FIGURE 3. Innocent facsimiles in *Innocence*. From *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*, directed by Oshii Mamoru. Dreamworks Home Entertainment, 2004.

INNOCENCE MAKES THE ARGUMENT THAT POSTHUMAN SUBJECTIVITY RETAINS IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF HUMAN AFFECT—LOVE AND OTHER EMOTIONS MAY STILL EXIST EVEN WHEN THE ORGANIC BODY DOES NOT.

Given these apparently parodic contrasts, it would appear that Villiers's novel promotes an idealistic vision of potentially perfect (artificial) womanhood—pure, innocent, incapable of sex,[21] and worthy of the love of a fine and brilliant man like Lord Ewald—while *Innocence* appears to hold up a cynical vision of corrupted (artificial) womanhood, sexualized and violent despite its innocent-looking form. But, in fact, *L'Ève future* is premised on the idea that love is a sham: that women are empty, mindless creatures whose beauty intoxicates men so that they lose all reason; that the apparent beauty of women—whether "andreid" or organic—is in every case entirely artificial;[22] and that the love and desire of even an educated, worldly man such as Lord Ewald can be adequately fed for a lifetime by the prerecorded speeches and gestures of an android. In contrast, under its cynical postmodern surface, *Innocence* makes the argument that posthuman subjectivity retains important elements of human affect—love and other emotions may still exist even when the organic body does not.

This is evident, for example, in the scene where Togusa and Batō visit police robot expert Haraway (named for cyborg theorist Donna Haraway) at the crime lab. Both Haraway and Batō evince sympathy for the gynoids and for all intelligent artificial creatures used and then discarded by humans, attributing to them significant affect: a justifiable anger at being abandoned. This is one of many scenes in the film in which characters assert the affective nature of ("female") artificial beings (including Batō's beloved dog, which has been artificially produced in some unspecified way). In contrast to Edison's contempt for women (whether real or artificial), men, and human emotion, the characters in Oshii's film affirm the possibility and authenticity of feelings.

In an interview conducted during the final stages of the film's production, Oshii explained the ideas his screenplay attempts to convey.[23] He begins by arguing that humans are losing their bodies—have been gradually losing them, in fact, since the acquisition of language by proto-humans (25–26). The body that preexists language and thought no longer exists for humans. The body is now just baggage, while humans live primarily through "the things they see, the things they hear, what comes into them through their heads" (26). He calls this functionless body the *tsumetai shintai* (the cold body) and relates it to the artificial, empty bodies of dolls (30–31). This "cold body" is the state toward which humans are inexorably moving, he says, whether as

cyborgs with increasing numbers of mechanical parts or as human "terminals," sentient nodes on the networks that make up urban, computerized life. The only creatures for whom the body does preexist language and thought are animals, who have what he calls the *niou shintai* (the body that smells): that is, a creature for whom body and selfhood are identical.[24] (Here "the body that smells" is meant to convey both the idea that animals use the more primitive sensory mode of smelling to explore and decipher their world and the idea that animal bodies have odor, as befits their unselfconscious organic nature.) Throughout *Innocence,* we see cold bodies contrasted with bodies that smell in the frequent depictions of dolls, automata, or gynoids, on the one hand, and dogs, birds, and fish, on the other.

In the past, Oshii explains, he believed that memory was the key to human selfhood or subjectivity, but now he has concluded that since memory can be fabricated and transferred, it cannot function as the foundation for selfhood. Nor can the body, since it is in the process of disappearing (27–28). (*Ghost in the Shell* can be considered a preliminary exploration of the ramifications of the loss of both reliably authentic memory and the body.) But Oshii remains surprisingly hopeful about the future of humanity. He says that he has come to believe that "even without our bodies we should be able to go



FIGURE 4. Juxtaposition of *tsumetai shintai* and *niou shintai* in *Innocence*. From *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*, directed by Oshii Mamoru. Dreamworks Home Entertainment, 2004.

on being humans; this [situation] is even desirable. If you look at history, that is basically how it has gone: it is only by losing our bodies that we have been able to create culture and civilization" (29).

To the unidentified interviewer's question "If humans have no memory and no body, in what sense are they still human?" Oshii responds with one word: *omoi,* which can be translated equally plausibly as "thought" or "feeling/emotion" (29–30). (I often translate it here as "affect," which connotes both.)[25] He says he wrote the film expressly to explore what happens when memory and the body are untrustworthy as foundations of selfhood and when affect is the only remaining marker of self; he wanted to imagine what the next stage of humankind would be under those circumstances (29–30). "Even if we are already resigned to the loss of [the body and memory], I believe that *affect remains* (*omoi ga nokoru*). It may be some kind of feeling toward a particular woman, or toward the dog who lives with you, or toward the body you have lost" (35). "The affect that a person leaves behind is the evidence that they have lived" (36). Oshii says that he wanted to create a film crystallized around this key phrase "affect remains" (*omoi ga nokoru*) (36). He therefore chose as his protagonist Batō, who "really is no longer anything more than some brain matter and his memories of a woman" (34).

Although Oshii is eloquent in this interview about his intention to challenge accepted notions about the limits of the human, it is in his films that he actually reveals his ideas in all their complexity and explores their philosophical or ontological ramifications.

In *Ghost in the Shell,* Kusanagi's body is the point around which the narrative condenses. It is her body we see in the opening credit sequence, reconstructed from (almost) zero, and it is her body that is torn apart through her own exertions as she struggles to reach the Puppet Master in the penultimate sequence. (This scene is echoed in *Innocence* when Kusanagi, who has downloaded herself into one of the gynoids, rips off her own arm trying to pull open a locked door.) It is Kusanagi's body that we see duplicated in others as she moves through the city in the lyrical passage in the center of the film—presumably these are duplicates made by the same company that manufactured her shell.

Kusanagi's lack of affect vis-à-vis her own body in *Ghost in the Shell* is striking. She shows no pain (and presumably feels none) when her body is ripped apart and evinces no shame at her own nakedness (although Batō, in an old-fashioned gesture, covers her with his jacket—another scene that is echoed in *Innocence*). In this she resembles most of the "women" in *L'Ève future*: Hadaly, who has no shame at revealing her body, including its internal

organs, to Ewald; Alicia, who tortures Ewald's delicate sense of morals with her lack of shame about having been tricked out of her virginity; and Evelyn Habal, who shamelessly seduces and enslaves Anderson.

In *Ghost in the Shell,* Kusanagi's lack of shame is not depicted as a moral issue. Rather, Kusanagi in a sense *stands for* the inauthenticity of the body/shell, and it is therefore not surprising that she exhibits no affective connection with it or through it. As I have argued elsewhere, we may presume that there *is no* affective kernel to the shell, in the ordinary sense: it would be counterproductive for the company that produces her body for the benefit and to the specifications of the Division Nine special security force to provide her with "innards" programmed to experience/produce pain or pleasure, or an outer shell that communicates the workings of her inner mechanisms to the world.[26] Like Hadaly, Kusanagi's "insides" are all artificial, and all her potential responses preprogrammed.[27] This is the opposite of the modernist notion of how the interiority produced by human embodiment enables selfhood, as outlined above. With no interiority to produce selfhood, and no mechanisms to experience or express affect—such as the shame that her lack of modesty "should" engender—Kusanagi signifies "inauthenticity," even "monstrosity," given the commonly shared conceptualization of what defines the human. And yet Kusanagi is the *protagonist* of the film, the focal point of the viewer's (emotional) response to it. Through our identification with this protagonist, we are put inside the experience of the posthuman "cold body." This experience is tolerable, and even interesting, because of the intense emotion that is *connected with* Kusanagi, even though hardly *expressed by* her in any conventional way.

IF THE DETERMINISTIC GENETIC CODING OF OUR ORGANIC BODIES CAN GIVE RISE TO THE SEEMINGLY WIDE RANGE OF A *HUMAN'S* AFFECTIVE STATES, THEN IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE MECHANICAL OR DIGITAL CODING OF ARTIFICIAL BODIES COULD ANALOGOUSLY GIVE RISE TO AFFECT.

This is not to say that Kusanagi is depicted as utterly without affect. Although she evinces neither pain nor dismay as her body is ripped apart, her eyes—that is, the direction of her gaze, the widening of her eyes, and the dilation or contraction of her pupils—briefly register emotion in several scenes, such as the moment when she sees her double in a café or when she first hears the Puppet Master's voice summoning her. It is not that Kusanagi is depicted as entirely devoid of affect but rather that the *origin* of the affect she experiences is highly ambiguous. Since a number of early scenes demonstrate the

"emptiness" of her shell—its entirely artificial, mechanical nature—viewers are left to wonder about the origins of the emotions that drive her increasingly desperate attempts to join with the Puppet Master.

In fact, the type of body and subjectivity I have described for Kusanagi would seem to reflect another, somewhat more contemporary, conceptualization of affect and selfhood: that of genetic determinism. In this model, which has been strengthened in recent years by technological advances that allow for the exact mapping of genes, the organic body is seen as being genetically programmed to respond in particular ways to environmental stimuli. While many scientists share the belief that the source of subjectivity or mind is purely physical, some believe that the sum of the interaction of the physical parts creates a greater, transcendent whole. In contrast, genetic determinists argue that the affect we experience and use to define ourselves as subjects is in fact "hardwired" in the DNA of every cell; each person's subjectivity is preprogrammed from birth. According to this model, there is no reason why an artificial being such as Hadaly or a composite being such as Kusanagi should lack affect. If the deterministic genetic coding of our organic bodies can give rise to the seemingly wide range of a *human's* affective states, then it would seem that the mechanical or digital coding of artificial bodies could analogously give rise to affect.

This is, in fact, precisely the way that Hadaly is at first depicted in *L'Ève future*. As Edison shows her to Ewald he explains that all of her responses have been prerecorded and preprogrammed: "Below the lungs, you see here the Cylinder on which will be coded the gestures, the bearing, the facial expressions, and the attitudes of the adored being. . . . To be more precise, this Cylinder is programmed to make possible some seventy different movements of a general character. It is approximately the same number that any well-bred woman can and should command."[28] Hadaly's "lungs" are two small phonographs made of gold, on which Edison will record numerous hours of speeches, poems, and songs, all in the voice of Ewald's human mistress, Alicia. When Ewald expresses his unhappiness at the thought of having to forever suit his conversation to the responses Hadaly will be programmed to give, Edison replies: "What matter, if it ensures the REALITY of your dream? . . . And who is really free in any case?"[29] Here we see Edison's cynicism regarding love and affective connection. He is sure that Hadaly's beauty, and the beautiful words that will be all she knows how to say, will be sufficient to arouse Ewald's desire, which will then by itself create the illusion of a relationship. At the end of the novel, Hadaly passes a sort of Turing test, in which she fools Ewald into believing that she is actually his live, organic mistress, Alicia, who

has miraculously gained the soul she lacked hitherto. When he realizes his mistake, Ewald's immediate infatuation with Hadaly seems to prove Edison correct about men's willingness to delude themselves into "recognizing" (actually constructing) affect through even predigested material. This parallels the view of genetic determinists, who argue that what we "feel" as emotion directed toward us from others is no more than an illusion that arises from our own genetically programmed desire to experience such emotion.

But Edison's "genetic determinist" point of view does not have the last word; Villiers has informed the reader that Hadaly's "soul" has been provided by the mystic Sowana, who transferred her own into Hadaly's mechanical shell. Moreover, it is not Hadaly's prerecorded words that convince Ewald of her authenticity and lovability but her silence and a tear she sheds—affective responses not programmed by Edison.[30] In other words, despite Villiers's undeniable misogyny (clear in many of his writings) and cynicism regarding the possibility of love between a man and a woman, he does endorse the concept of affect as existing independently of the body's programming.

Although it would seem that the model of genetic determinism should explain Kusanagi's mysterious affect as well, considering that almost all the elements of her body are manufactured and programmed by a corporation, this is not the way that Oshii depicts affect in *Ghost in the Shell* either. Throughout the film we see Kusanagi's gradually intensifying efforts to reproduce, in order to prove to herself that she is real and allowing her to move to the next stage of (postcyborg) evolution. Yet there is no indication that Kusanagi's obviously quite desperate efforts are motivated by desires that arise from her body's programming, her own particular kind of "interiority." On the contrary, it is almost as if Kusanagi is *infected* with affect from an outside source (possibly the Puppet Master).[31]

Batō in *Innocence* is depicted similarly: we see him lose a flesh-and-blood arm, and have it replaced—as the majority of the rest of his body has already been—with a mechanical prosthetic. Like Kusanagi, his body is shown to be just a functional shell, not an "authentic" foundation for selfhood. Batō shows little emotion through most of the film; his obviously prosthetic eyes enhance the impression that he lacks conventional affect. Again, however, we find that Batō's desperately felt (though hardly expressed) emotion—his love and longing for the absent Kusanagi—is the motivating force of the film. The plot may focus on the unraveling of a crime, but the impact of the film comes entirely from the affective subtext.

When we consider the emotional force of *Innocence*, a question arises: just exactly *what* is in love with *what*? The verb, the affect, remains, but the

"THE TRANSMISSION OF AFFECT, IF ONLY FOR AN INSTANT, ALTERS THE BIOCHEMISTRY AND THE NEUROLOGY OF THE SUBJECT. THE 'ATMOSPHERE' OR THE ENVIRONMENT LITERALLY GETS INTO THE INDIVIDUAL."

subject and object are obscure, unlocatable, demonstrably inauthentic. The emotions in the film are intense, but they do not show on the surface of bodies; they are always outside any enclosed, autonomous subject, always moving, transferable. Oshii is, in fact, proposing/depicting a model for the origin and nature of human affect that differs significantly from the mainstream modernist one outlined above. Unlike Villiers, Oshii does not suggest any mystical or religious origin for subjectivity or affect; but unlike the more recent genetic determinist model, he also does not suggest that these attributes are preprogrammed and unalterable.

Oshii's depiction of selfhood more closely resembles ideas put forward by recent theorists who argue that affect does not arise solely or even primarily from within a self-contained, autonomous body.[32] Teresa Brennan is perhaps the most radical of these, as she argues that affect *moves* between (and into and out of) bodies in a literal, physical sense. She describes what she calls the transmission of affect:

> Is there anyone who has not, at least once, walked into a room and "felt the atmosphere"? . . . The transmission of affect, whether it is grief, anxiety, or anger, is social or psychological in origin. But the transmission is also responsible for bodily changes; some are brief changes, as in a whiff of the room's atmosphere, some longer lasting. In other words, the transmission of affect, if only for an instant, alters the biochemistry and the neurology of the subject. The "atmosphere" or the environment literally gets into the individual. Physically and biologically, something is there that was not there before, but it did not originate sui generis: it was not generated solely or sometimes even in part by the individual organism or its genes.
>
> In a time when the popularity of genetic explanations for social behavior is increasing, the transmission of affect is a conceptual oddity. If transmission takes place and has effects on behavior, it is not genes that determine social life; it is the socially induced affect that changes our biology.[33]

As Brennan explains, the body experiences physiological changes in response to chemical stimuli—ingesting airborne pheromone molecules through the nose, for example. In this case, a material substance from outside the body penetrates the body's boundaries through one of its somatosensory gateways

and initiates what is called by neurologists "entrainment": neurological networks are activated, and the body responds with the release of appropriate corticosteroids (for example). Entrainment need not involve the ingestion of *material* objects such as chemical molecules (through nose, mouth, or skin), however: "Visual images [and] auditory traces, also have a direct physical impact; their reception involves the activation of neurological networks, stimulated by spectrum vibrations at various frequencies. These also constitute transmissions breaching the bounds between individual and environment."[34]

In Brennan's model, bodies respond as they are "programmed" to do: the individual body cannot (or at least not easily) resist the entrainment caused by chemical or other sensory input. But her view is not entirely reductionist because "we may influence the registration of the transmitted affect in a variety of ways; affects are not recovered or registered in a vacuum."[35]

Brennan's view contrasts with the modernist view of selfhood: in the modernist view it is "cognition, more than emotion, [that] determines agency." The valorization of cognition leads to an idea of the self-containment of the subject: the brain, as the location of cognition, is seen as the autonomous, sole origin of selfhood. To believe on the contrary that emotions/affect determine agency and to understand that affect is transmissible leads to a view of human selfhood that is interactive. In sum, the important points in Brennan's model are (1) that bodies are far from being self-contained, as in the modernist model—rather, they are permeable; and (2) bodies are equally far from being autonomous, as in the genetic determinist model—rather, they interact with each other.

Oshii highlights the permeability of the body in *Ghost in the Shell* and even more so in *Innocence,* but since he features cyborg bodies, this permeability is effected through interfaces that link his characters to the Net. Their bodies are penetrated by data streams rather than organic chemicals, but, just as in Brennan's model, those data streams produce effects that are both physical and, in many cases, affective. Information here is figured as material and physical, effecting material, physical changes as it moves between one system (such as a body) and another. This contrasts with the more commonly held notion, described earlier, that the information about a person's internal affect that may show on the body's surface—a smile, a blush of shame—is nonmaterial, simply communication.

Batō's general lack of apparent affect in *Innocence* is in some ways even more striking than Kusanagi's in *Ghost in the Shell.* Because Batō's eyes are obviously prosthetic, the viewer does not even have dilated or contracted pupils to use as guides for interpreting changes in his emotions. But, just as with

Kusanagi in *Ghost in the Shell,* Batō in *Innocence* eventually reveals that he has been "infected" with affect. We see him go berserk in a small neighborhood store because (as we learn later) his prosthetic arm has been hacked so that he unconsciously shoots himself. And it is not only Batō who experiences affect in this way. Later he defeats a group of yakuza thugs by hacking into their "cheap prosthetics," thereby fooling them into hysterically expending all their ammunition on an illusion. And, in the mansion of the genius hacker, Kim, Togusa has his sense hacked and suffers a series of terrifying hallucinations. In all these cases, just as in the "ghost dubbing" of the Hadaly gynoids, which is predicated on and in turn causes such violence, the frightening, uncanny nature of entrainment is emphasized. The metaphorical models here are invasion, expressed through the idea of "hacking," and contagion, infection, as expressed through the idea of a computer "virus." In highlighting the negative, terrifying aspects of physical interactivity and the transmission of affect, Oshii is playing to contemporary human fears about our seemingly inexorable march into a posthuman condition marked by the loss of stable boundaries. Remarkably, however, fear is not his final message; *Innocence* ultimately affirms the *desirability* of affect's capacity for transference and interactivity.

In the title of this paper I have used the word "infectivity" because I think it well expresses the way Oshii depicts the nature of affect. "Infectivity" refers to the ability of a pathogen to establish an infection; it is thus distinguished from "virulence," which refers to the degree of damage done once the infection is established. Some infections, such as leprosy, are not very infective but highly virulent. The converse is also possible: some pathogens, such as those of the common cold, have high infectivity but low virulence.[36] When we are forced to understand our bodies/selves as permeable to affective influences from the outside that cause literal physical changes, we tend to think in terms of an analogy with infection by virulent pathogens. This is a scary image.

We know, however, that some highly infective materials are not virulent at all. Some infective bacteria, for example, establish commensal relationships with a host, living together with little mutual harm or benefit. Others establish symbiotic, beneficial relationships with the host they have infected (such as the bacteria in the human intestine that help in the digestion of complex carbohydrates). The "invasions" of the body effected by external substances may be of any of these three characters: parasitic/pathogenic, commensal, or symbiotic/beneficial. Contemporary science and medicine recognize that the bodies we tend to think of as autonomous, clean, and purely *human* are, in fact, multiply invaded, radically hybrid. The "insides" we imagine as producing our *human* subjectivity and affect are, in fact, inhabited by millions of

nonhuman creatures. Although most of us tend to repress this knowledge and, when that repression fails, to view it as terrifying, narratives such as *Innocence* can remind us that our physical permeability to others is at times actually beneficial.

In *Innocence,* Kusanagi is able to move into and out of complex systems, such as artificial or wired bodies; in this sense, she herself is "infective." But this infectivity is shown throughout the film to function as beneficial to the protagonist, Batō. In the scene in which Batō battles the gynoids it is clear that he would have been overwhelmed and killed if Kusanagi had not downloaded herself into one of the gynoid bodies to fight on his side. Previous to that climactic scene as well, Kusanagi "infects" various systems to give Batō crucial warnings or hints about the solution of the mystery. It is Kusanagi's ability to move in and out of bodies/systems as information that allows her to continue to interact with Batō in (temporarily) physical form, saving his life and helping him to locate the final piece of the puzzle. It is her ability to "infect" other information systems that allows her to communicate hints to Batō even when she is not embodied. And it is because "affect remains" (*omoi ga nokoru*) that Batō has a reason for living. Although his continuing love for the vanished Kusanagi is painful, it is clearly depicted as integral to his current sense of self, his sense of purpose. (His affection for his dog serves a similar function.) When we consider the artificial Batō's love for either the



FIGURE 5. "What exactly is in love with what?" From *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence,* directed by Oshii Mamoru. Dreamworks Home Entertainment, 2004.

disembodied Kusanagi or for his artificially produced dog we may not be able to answer the question "*what* exactly is in love with *what*," but the predicate, the affect, remains, suggesting that "the posthuman" retains at least some valuable characteristics of "the human."

Notes

1. This is my translation of the Japanese sentence used by Oshii Mamoru as the epigraph to *Innocence.* The Japanese reads "Wareware no kamigami mo wareware no kibō mo, mohaya tada kagakuteki na mono de shika nai to sureba, wareware no ai mo mata kagakuteki de atte ikenai iware ga arimashou ka?" This is from a Japanese translation of Villiers's 1886 novel, *L'Ève future* (literally, Future Eve). The original French sentence reads: "Puisque nos dieux et nos espoirs ne sont plus que *scientifiques,* pourquoi nos amours ne le deviendraient-ils pas également?" (emphasis in original). (Villiers, *L'Ève future,* ed. Alan Raitt [Paris: Gallimard, 1993], 267.) *L'Ève future* was translated into Japanese at least twice: as *Mirai no ibu,* trans. Watanabe Kazuo (Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1937; reprinted by Iwanami Shoten in 1938); and as *L'Ève future/Mirai no ibu,* trans. Saitō Isō (Tokyo: Tōkyō Sōgensha, 1996). It has been translated into English at least twice as well: as *Eve of the Future Eden,* trans. Marilyn Gaddis Rose (Lawrence, Kans.: Coronado Press, 1981); and as *Tomorrow's Eve,* trans. Robert Martin Adams (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982). All subsequent English quotations from *L'Ève future* are from Adams's translation, unless otherwise noted.

2. I am indebted to Sneja Gunew for inviting me to participate in a year-long group project on affect through the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies at the University of British Columbia, which introduced me to theoretical and critical works on affect. In addition, I am grateful to Sneja, Jackie Stacy, Sara Ahmed, and others who took part in the affect project for inspiration and insightful feedback on my ongoing research on the Japanese cyborg. I am also indebted to Christopher Bolton for incisive comments on an early version of this article.

3. Mary Ann Doane, "Technophilia: Technology, Representation, and the Feminine," in *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reader,* ed. Gill Kirkup et al. (London: Routledge, 2000), 111.

4. According to Alan Raitt, Villiers had begun composition of a story about the creation of an artificial woman as early as 1877, inspired by the announcement in France that year of Edison's invention of the phonograph (Raitt, "Preface to Villiers's, *L'Ève future,* 7). I have written elsewhere about the relationship between *L'Ève future* and *Innocence*; for more about the connection between these two works and other science fiction novels, films, and anime, see Sharalyn Orbaugh, "Frankenstein and the Cyborg Metropolis: The Evolution of Body and City in Science Fiction Narratives," in *Cinema Anime,* ed. Steven T. Brown (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 81–111.

5. Edison is wrong: *hadaly* does not mean "ideal" in Farsi.

6. Psychoanalytic theorists, such as Freud, focus less on the body as the instantiation of inside/outside boundaries of the self; instead they posit a "body ego" that is the mind's projection of its own "physical" boundaries. Didier Anzieu has reformulated this as the "skin ego," again as a mental projection of the self's "physical" boundaries, based on

the infant's experience of skin as surface and marker of separation between self and other. Nonetheless, whether a matter of literal materialized flesh or, as in these cases, a projection of mind, it is the body that is used to provide the fundamental understanding of interiority/exteriority.

7. At least since the time of Descartes's separation of mind and body, philosophers, physicians, and scientists have argued the question of the origin and location of mind, subjectivity, or affect; an overview of such arguments is unfortunately impossible in the scope of this essay. Among the most frequently debated questions are: does the mind arise purely from the *physical* elements that make up a human, or does it have an external (usually religious or mystical) source; and if it does arise purely from the physical, is it entirely a matter of the neurophysiology of the brain, or does it arise more generally from the entire body? Among the diversity of theories there is surprising agreement, however, in the basic conceptualization of the location of "selfhood" or "mind" (from which affect originates), at least while the person in question is alive: the self/mind is conceived as somehow housed *inside* the body. For a good overview of many recent theories of mind, see Carol de Dobay Rifelj, "Minds, Computers, and Hadaly," in *Jeering Dreamers: Essays on "L'Ève Future,"* ed. John Anzalone (Amsterdam: Editions Rodobi B. V., 1996), 127–39. For a treatment of the first *Ghost in the Shell* film within the framework of classical philosophy, see the article by Chris Goto-Jones in this volume.

8. Doane, "Technophilia," 111.

9. Villiers, *Tomorrow's Eve,* 125.

10. *Ghost in the Shell* was originally a manga series by Shirō Masamune, begun in 1991. In 1995, Oshii Mamoru directed a feature-length anime film, *Kōkaku kidōtai* (*Ghost in the Shell*), based on the manga; *Innocence,* with an original screenplay by Oshii, is the 2004 sequel to that film. In addition, from 2002, a televised anime series called *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex* was launched, based on the same characters and themes as Shirō's manga. Here I discuss only the two films by Oshii, but many of the same issues regarding cyborg/android affect arise in the other *Ghost in the Shell* narratives.

11. In Shirō's manga and in *Stand Alone Complex* yet another type of posthuman creature appears: the *tachikoma,* machines that have no organic component at all, and are not human-shaped, but are intelligent and self-aware. The implication is that their intelligence is purely a matter of artificial intelligence (AI), with no connection to an "original" human mind.

12. At the end of the film, her friend Batō sacrifices his own arm to save her brain from destruction and escapes with it, eventually installing it in a new body. Again the implication is that without this "original" organic matter, Kusanagi would no longer exist in any meaningful form. But *Innocence* challenges this implication, suggesting that Kusanagi somehow retains her identity and some version of "selfhood," despite being completely disembodied.

13. Quoted in Christopher Bolton, "From Wooden Cyborgs to Celluloid Souls: Mechanical Bodies in Anime and Japanese Puppet Theater," *positions* 10, no. 3 (2002), 736. Bolton's translation.

14. Oshii makes this point himself in "Shintai to kioku no higan ni" (On the equinox of body and memory), in *Oshii Mamoru ron: Memento mori* (Essays on Oshii Mamoru: Memento mori), ed. Nihon Terebi (Tokyo: Nihon Terebi Hōsō Kabushikigaisha, 2004), 34.

15. Rifelj, "Minds, Computers, and Hadaly," 130.

16. Haraway, the robot expert who is conducting the police investigation into the aberrant gynoids, tells Batō and Togusa that the Hadaly model had found a way to overcome robot rule number three: "A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not injure a human being." Oshii refers here to Isaac Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics, first detailed in his short work "Runaround" (in *Astounding Science Fiction,* March 1942).

17. The name of this company is a playful gesture on Oshii's part toward another source text. *Locus Solus* is the title of another French proto–science fiction novel (like *L'Ève future*), written by Raymond Roussel in 1914. Its protagonist, a wealthy inventor/scientist named Chanterel, shows a group of guests around his huge estate, on which he has housed his numerous experiments. Several of these involve the (re-)animation of dead or inorganic tissue, and all are inspired by affecting stories, which Chanterel relates in detail, together with an explanation of the science behind each experiment. While *Locus Solus* is less obviously linked to *Innocence* (except in Oshii's depiction of the mansion of the master hacker Kim), it too functions as inspiration for Oshii's screenplay, in its attention to the connections between affect and science in the context of artificial creatures.

18. Reductionism here is a shorthand reference to the belief that the human mind and emotions—the self or soul—can be explained completely in terms of physical causes. A devout Catholic, Villiers evidently intends to mock his character Edison's belief in the omnipotence of science. For more on this, see Rifelj, "Minds, Computers, and Hadaly," and Raitt, "Preface."

19. Note that by the end of this strange novel all three main female characters are dead, while the men live on: the supremely beautiful but soulless Alicia drowns; the supremely good and soul-full but jilted widow Any (Sowana) Anderson dies mysteriously after imparting her soul to Hadaly; and Hadaly, the ideal combination of supreme beauty and supreme "soul-fullness," disappears at the bottom of the ocean when the ship goes down. (The evil seductress Evelyn Habal is also long dead.) This "tragic" ending well suits the cynical attitude toward women and love that permeates the novel: it may be better for Ewald that his love for Hadaly is never put to an extended test.

20. Villiers, *Tomorrow's Eve,* 164. Precisely how the andreids are intended to keep men together with their wives is nowhere explained in the novel.

21. In *L'Ève future,* it is made clear that Hadaly will not be capable of the physical act of sex even after she "comes to life" in every other sense. (In this she is like Kusanagi in her current disembodied form, and radically different from the gynoid-sexaroids, who are built specifically for sexual interaction with human men.) Edison convinces Lord Ewald that the beautiful, idyllic mood with which one is suffused in the first days of love—which is what he will experience forever with Hadaly—is so intoxicating and satisfying that the physical union will not be missed. (This sexless love is, of course, the same kind of love Batō must accept if Kusanagi remains his love-object.)

22. Edison demonstrates this fact to Ewald by showing him a movie (before cinema had been invented!) of the seductress Evelyn Habal who had ruined Any Anderson's marriage. Her attractiveness is undeniable until Edison shows Ewald the loathsome prosthetic devices—wig, false teeth, cosmetics, false bosom and hips—by which Evelyn's illusion of beauty was achieved.

23. Oshii, "Shintai to kioku no higan ni"; page numbers will be cited parenthetically in the text.

24. In this Oshii moves away from Donna Haraway, despite much overlap in their ideas about our posthuman present and future. Haraway's cyborg embodies the deconstruction of three seemingly fundamental boundaries: human versus animal, machine versus organism, and the physical versus the nonmaterial. For Oshii, though, the posthuman condition involves an even greater distance between the human and the animal.

25. Among the many recent attempts to define "affect," I incline to Teresa Brennan's, which links the somatic aspects of emotion with an evaluative judgment about that emotion—both feeling and thought are required for affect. See Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004), 4–6.

26. See Sharalyn Orbaugh, "Sex and the Single Cyborg: Japanese Pop Culture Experiments in Subjectivity," in *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams: Japanese Science Fiction from Origins to Anime,* ed. Christopher Bolton, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., and Takayuki Tatsumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 172–92. Kusanagi and her Division Nine colleagues have obviously been programmed to "feel" and exhibit some kinds of affect—their voices, for example, are flexible and emotive, not merely machinic—but presumably only those that may support their function as special security police. They evidently do not feel physical pain, nor do they bleed.

27. Kusanagi herself remarks on the shortcomings of her programming when she tells Togusa that she chose him as a partner, despite his "weak" organic body, because his human unpredictability will provide a useful counter to the limits of her preprogrammed responses to a situation.

28. Villiers, *Tomorrow's Eve,* 131.

29. Villiers, *Tomorrow's Eve,* 132 (punctuation as in original).

30. For more on this point, see Rifelj, "Minds, Computers, and Hadaly," 138–39.

31. The evocative music provided by Kawai Kenji is crucial to the viewer's understanding of the emotional states of the protagonists in both *Ghost in the Shell* and *Innocence.* The role of music in these films, and in a lot of postmodern visual narrative, deserves a great deal more consideration than I can give it here, especially in relation to the "infectivity" of affect, discussed below.

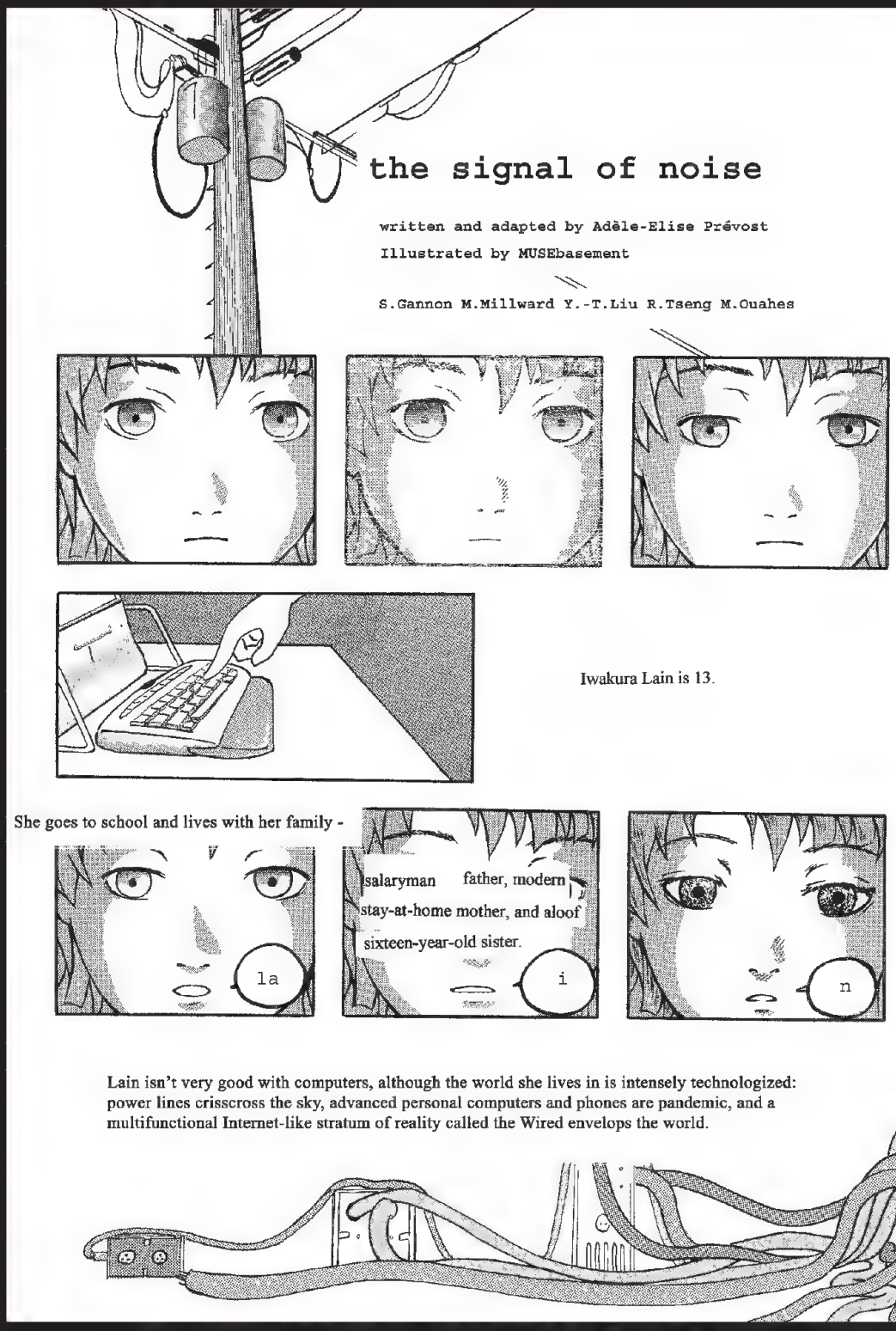
32. A number of (primarily feminist) theorists have challenged the idea of the body as autonomous and closed, although they do not go as far as Brennan in terms of positing actual physical transmission of affect. The essays in S. Ahmed and J. Stacey, ed., *Thinking Through the Skin* (London: Routledge, 2001) provide a useful overview of challenges to the idea of the body as closed. It is noteworthy, however, that even the authors of these challenges frequently conceptualize the body as a "container" for affect and selfhood, if not an entirely discrete one.

33. Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect,* 1–2.

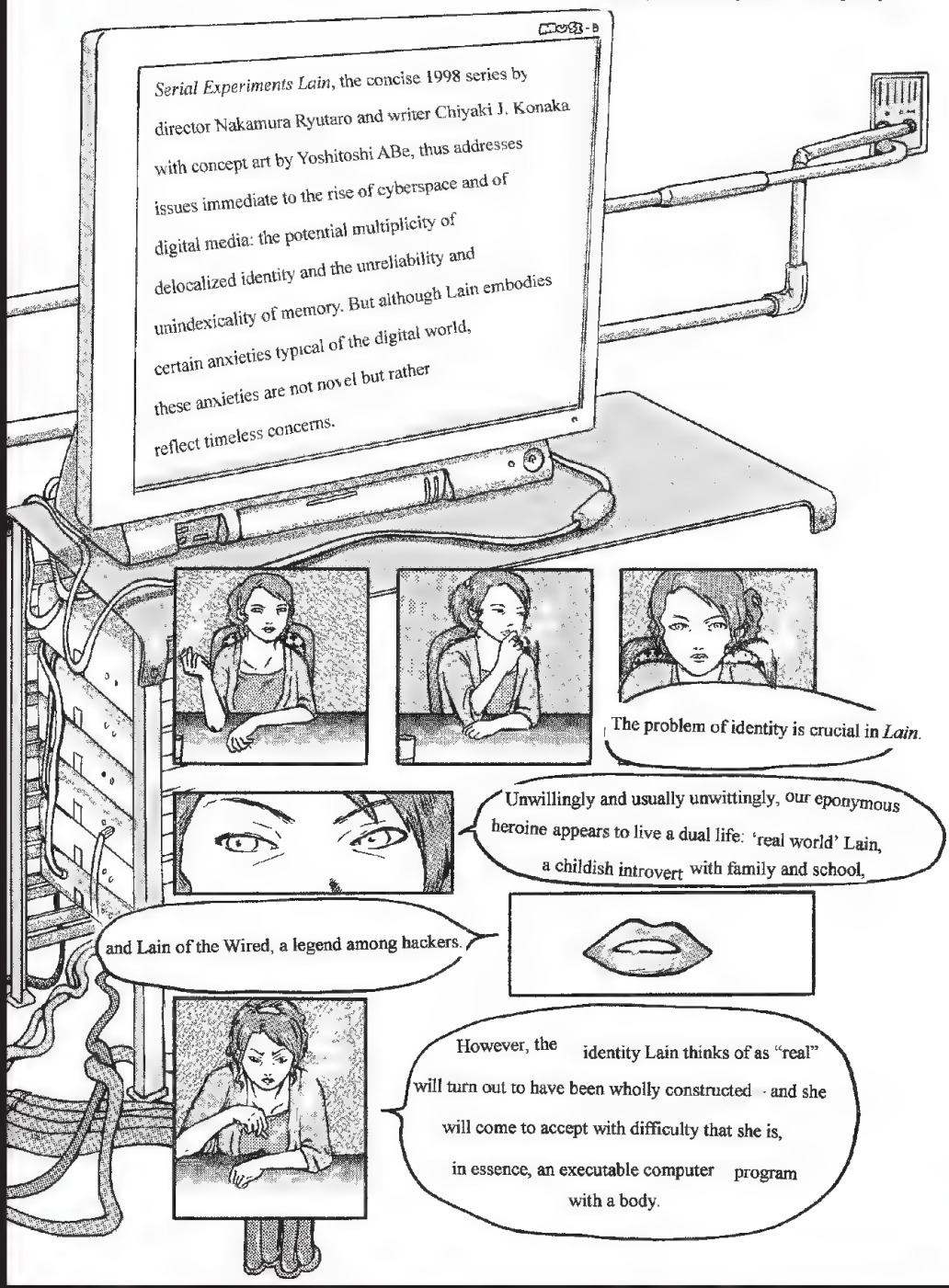
34. Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect,* 10. It is not possible in the confines of this essay to do justice to the mass of evidence that Brennan marshals to support her model of the transmission of affect. For her descriptions of the medical, scientific evidence for affective entrainment, see especially pages 68–75.

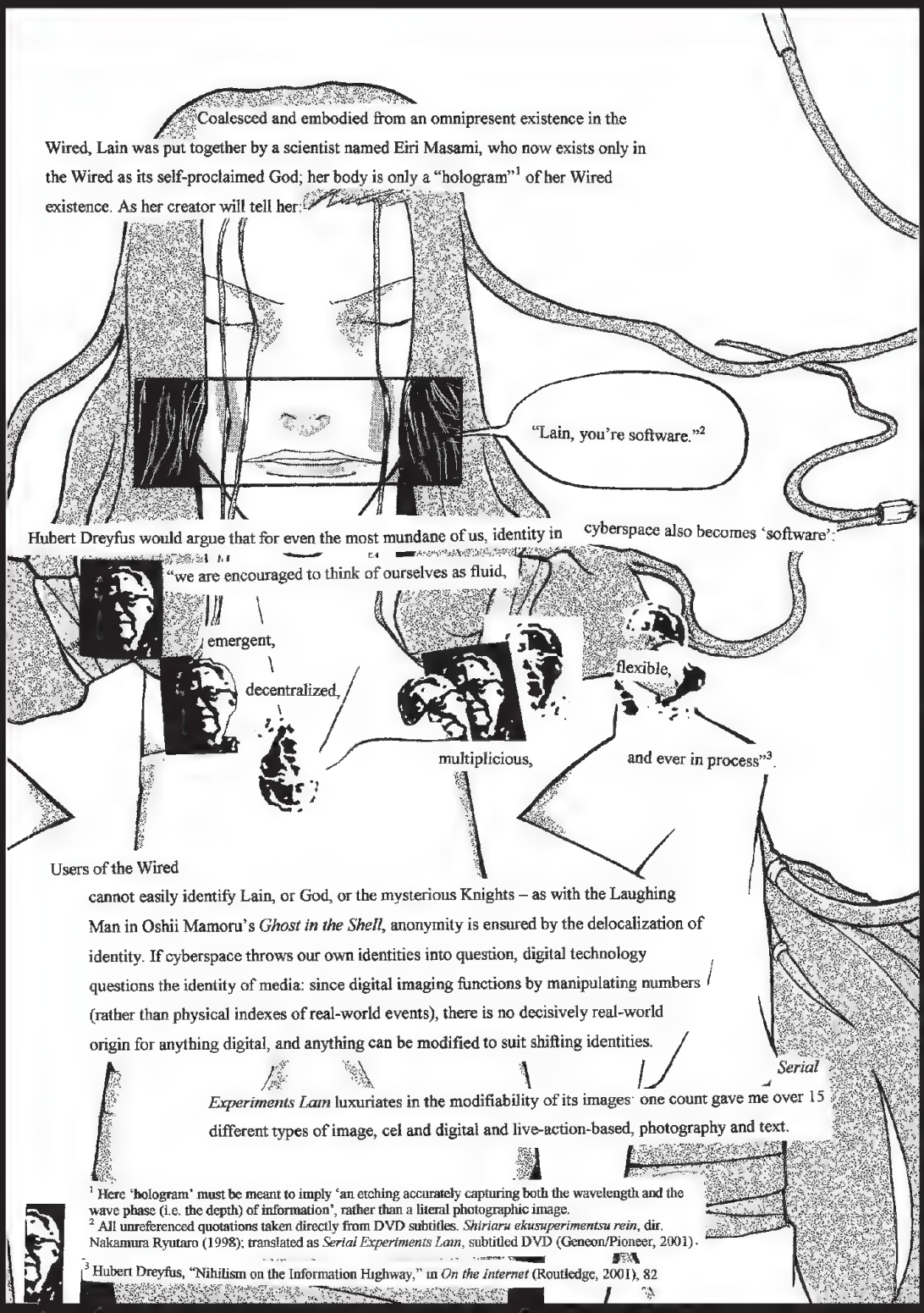
35. Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect,* 6.

36. It is significant that Edison describes Evelyn Habal's type of seductiveness as a "plague" (highly infective and highly virulent) that will devastate and destroy mankind.

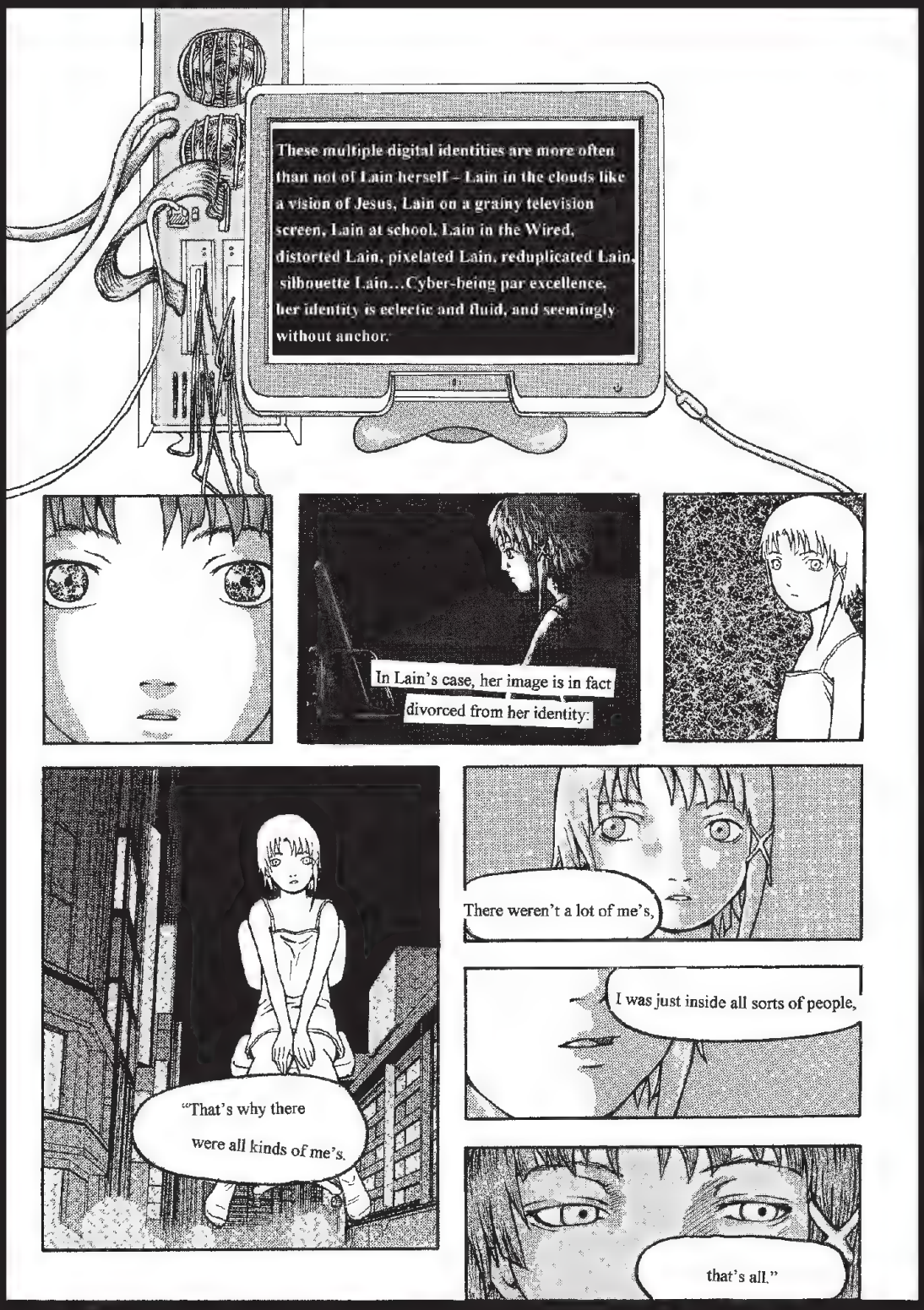

the signal of noise
written and adapted by Adèle-Elise Prévost
Illustrated by MUSEbasement
S.Gannon M.Millward Y.-T.Liu R.Tseng M.Ouahes
Iwakura Lain is 13.
She goes to school and lives with her family -
la
salaryman father, modern
stay-at-home mother, and aloof
sixteen-year-old sister.
i
n
Lain isn't very good with computers, although the world she lives in is intensely technologized: power lines crisscross the sky, advanced personal computers and phones are pandemic, and a multifunctional Internet-like stratum of reality called the Wired envelops the world.

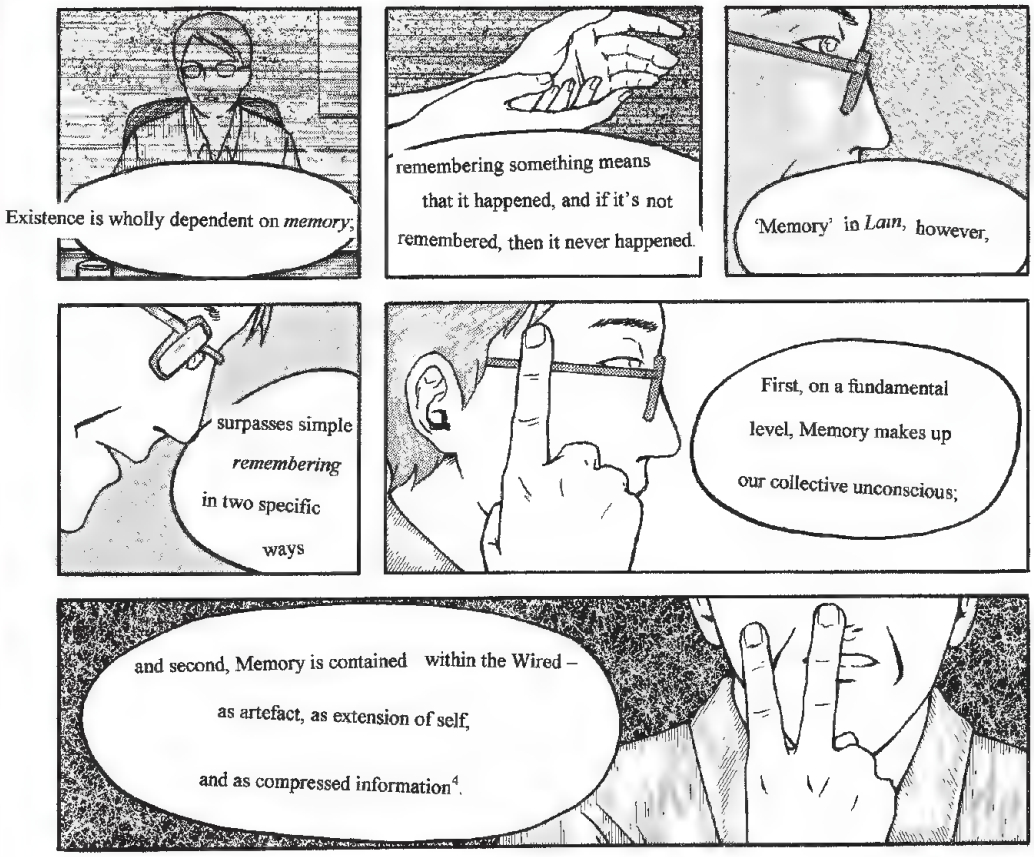
When Lain acquires a new top-of-the-line computer and proceeds to connect to the Wired, she begins to fall into an existence where reality is undetermined, memory is malleable, and identity is a diffuse quality.


Serial Experiments Lain, the concise 1998 series by director Nakamura Ryutaro and writer Chiyaki J. Konaka with concept art by Yoshitoshi ABe, thus addresses issues immediate to the rise of cyberspace and of digital media: the potential multiplicity of delocalized identity and the unreliability and unindexicality of memory. But although Lain embodies certain anxieties typical of the digital world, these anxieties are not novel but rather reflect timeless concerns.
The problem of identity is crucial in *Lain*.
Unwillingly and usually unwittingly, our eponymous heroine appears to live a dual life: 'real world' Lain, a childish introvert with family and school,
and Lain of the Wired, a legend among hackers.
However, the identity Lain thinks of as "real" will turn out to have been wholly constructed - and she will come to accept with difficulty that she is, in essence, an executable computer program with a body.


Coalesced and embodied from an omnipresent existence in the Wired, Lain was put together by a scientist named Eiri Masami, who now exists only in the Wired as its self-proclaimed God; her body is only a "hologram"[1] of her Wired existence. As her creator will tell her:
"Lain, you're software."[2]
Hubert Dreyfus would argue that for even the most mundane of us, identity in cyberspace also becomes 'software':
"we are encouraged to think of ourselves as fluid,
emergent,
decentralized,
flexible,
multiplicious,
and ever in process"[3].
Users of the Wired
cannot easily identify Lain, or God, or the mysterious Knights – as with the Laughing Man in Oshii Mamoru's *Ghost in the Shell*, anonymity is ensured by the delocalization of identity. If cyberspace throws our own identities into question, digital technology questions the identity of media: since digital imaging functions by manipulating numbers (rather than physical indexes of real-world events), there is no decisively real-world origin for anything digital, and anything can be modified to suit shifting identities.
Serial Experiments Lain luxuriates in the modifiability of its images: one count gave me over 15 different types of image, cel and digital and live-action-based, photography and text.

[1] Here 'hologram' must be meant to imply 'an etching accurately capturing both the wavelength and the wave phase (i.e. the depth) of information', rather than a literal photographic image.
[2] All unreferenced quotations taken directly from DVD subtitles. *Shiriaru ekusuperimentsu rein*, dir. Nakamura Ryutaro (1998); translated as *Serial Experiments Lain*, subtitled DVD (Geneon/Pioneer, 2001).
[3] Hubert Dreyfus, "Nihilism on the Information Highway," in *On the Internet* (Routledge, 2001), 82


These multiple digital identities are more often than not of Lain herself – Lain in the clouds like a vision of Jesus, Lain on a grainy television screen, Lain at school, Lain in the Wired, distorted Lain, pixelated Lain, reduplicated Lain, silhouette Lain…Cyber-being par excellence, her identity is eclectic and fluid, and seemingly without anchor.
In Lain's case, her image is in fact divorced from her identity.
"That's why there were all kinds of me's.
There weren't a lot of me's,
I was just inside all sorts of people,
that's all."


Existence is wholly dependent on *memory*;
remembering something means that it happened, and if it's not remembered, then it never happened.
'Memory' in *Lain*, however,
surpasses simple *remembering* in two specific ways
First, on a fundamental level, Memory makes up our collective unconscious;
and second, Memory is contained within the Wired – as artefact, as extension of self, and as compressed information[4].

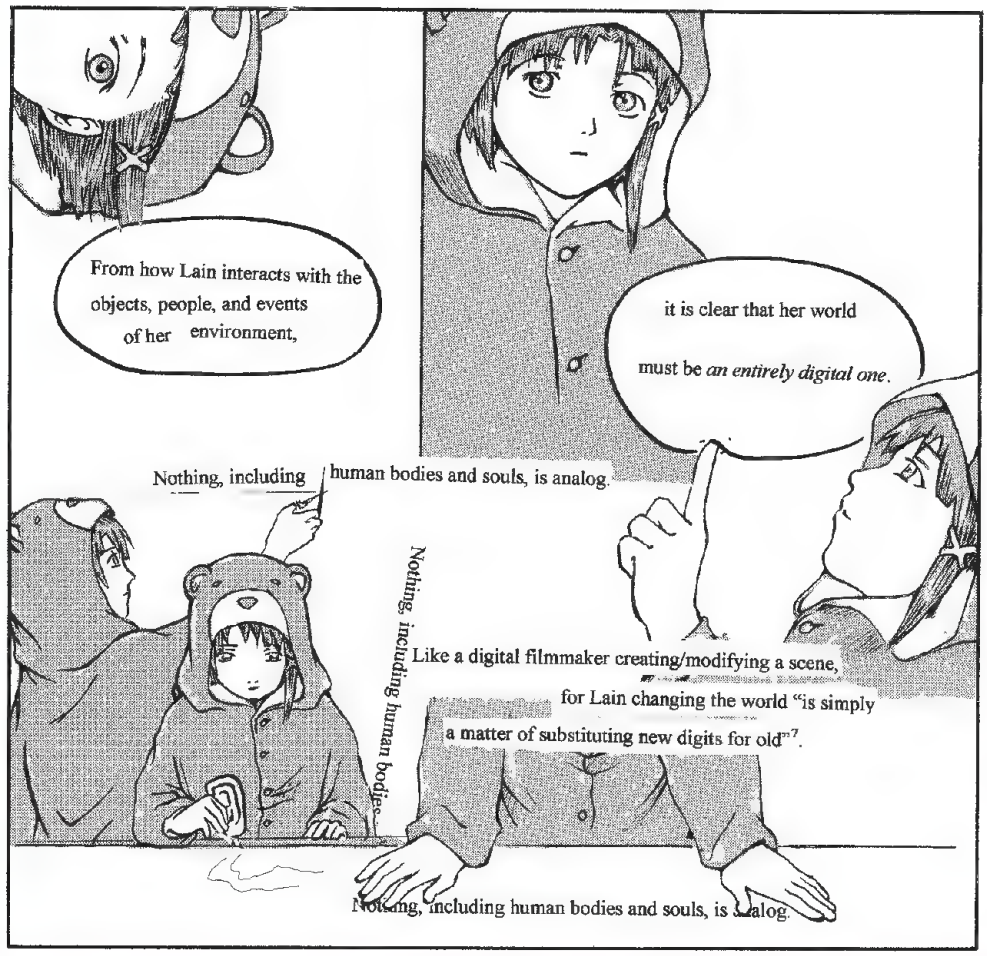
The Wired and the 'real world' at first appear to be as distinct as our world and the Internet, if it weren't for some tokens of abnormal interconnectivity which gradually increase in number and in strength until the two worlds are difficult to tease apart.

In the Wired, Lain quickly develops abilities beyond those of any hacker: she is able to translate her real-world image spectacularly well into digital form, and even enter into other people's virtual realities. Soon, however, it becomes clear that not only can she navigate the Wired with the ease of real-world action, but she can also apply things typically 'virtual' to the world of her physical body.

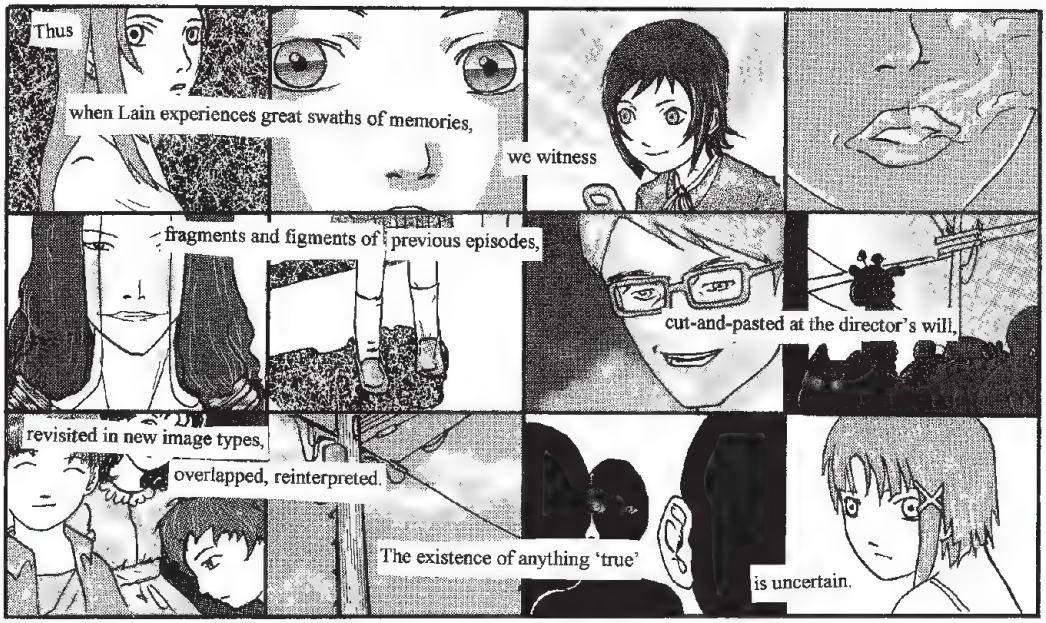
[4] In this way, we could see Lain as *quite literally* a new archetype, generated by the collective unconscious and given form in the Wired.

[5] Philip Rosen, "Old and New Image, Indexicality, and Historicity in the Digital Utopia," in *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory* (University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 302.
[6] Ibid., 328.
[7] Lev Manovich, "What is Digital Cinema?" in *The Digital Dialectic: New Essays on New Media* (MIT Press, 1999), 181.

Most remarkably, Lain is able to delete information from people to rewrite their memories. This is the problem of virtual memory, part of the tensions of the digital age. Digital information, by its very nature as "a seemingly arbitrary code of discrete, relational elements (numbers)"[5], is almost infinitely malleable. Nothing serves as an unambiguous index of a real-life event; any pre existing medium can be digitized and turned into raw material, and in this grand levelling "universal coding procedure"[6] anything can be transmuted, redistributed, and recast in new ways.


From how Lain interacts with the objects, people, and events of her environment,
it is clear that her world must be *an entirely digital one*.
Nothing, including human bodies and souls, is analog.
Nothing, including human bodies
Like a digital filmmaker creating/modifying a scene, for Lain changing the world "is simply a matter of substituting new digits for old"[7].
Nothing, including human bodies and souls, is analog.

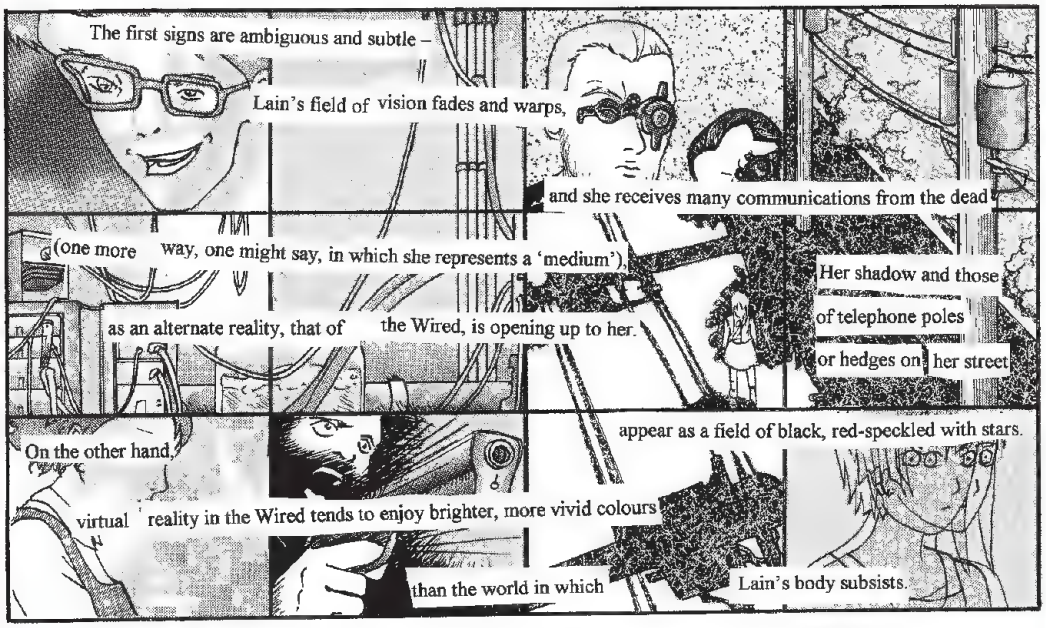
In a world of such "inherent mutability"[8], the fact that memory causes existence by reinventing the world at each moment is tremendously dangerous. Again this is a fear which isn't new to humanity; much like the problem of the self, the uncertain reliability of our memories is a worry that has haunted mankind for much longer than there have been computers. From a media perspective, this fear is that our records may be synthetic, cut out of whole cloth, if so desired. In a digital world, this is entirely conceivable.



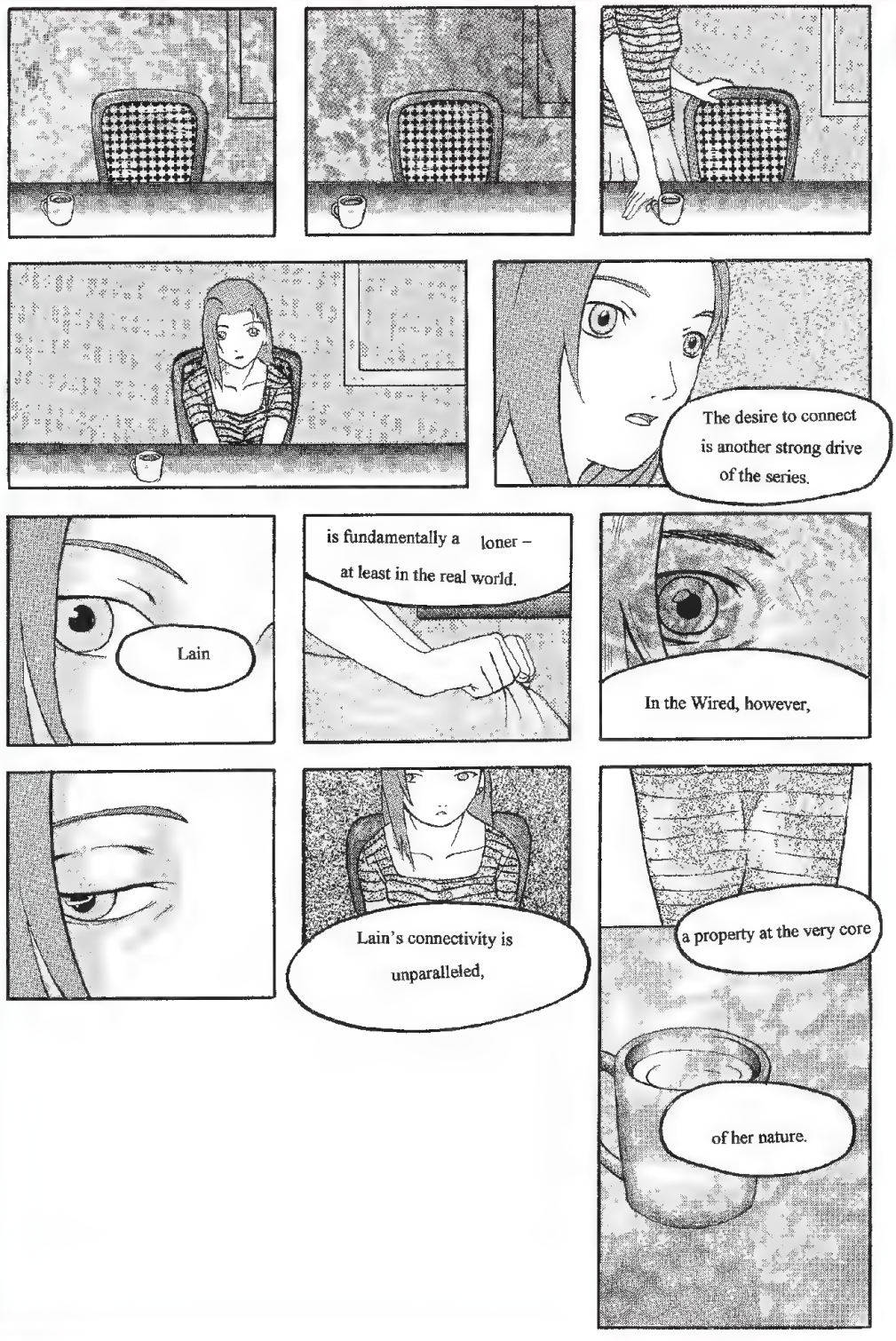
This throws into complete darkness what one should consider to be 'reality'. "The Wired and the real world are one and the same", says one *Lain* character. Another claims that "the real world and the Wired are attached end-to-end", and Lain herself ends up remarking that "the real world isn't real at all…"

[8] Ibid

In order to visually throw the reality of the "real world" into question, *Serial Experiments Lain* uses a play of interference and distortion, of signal and noise.


The first signs are ambiguous and subtle –
Lain's field of vision fades and warps,
and she receives many communications from the dead
(one more way, one might say, in which she represents a 'medium'),
as an alternate reality, that of the Wired, is opening up to her.
Her shadow and those of telephone poles or hedges on her street
appear as a field of black, red-speckled with stars.
On the other hand,
virtual reality in the Wired tends to enjoy brighter, more vivid colours
than the world in which
Lain's body subsists.

Signs become more overt: a man walking down the sidewalk in VR goggles mutters, "I'm breaking the barrier between the real world and the Wired...", and what he sees through his enhanced eyes is (apparently) digitized live-action film — breaking the barrier, as it were, between fleshy, moving humans and patterns of information, in his series-internal world as well as for the viewer.

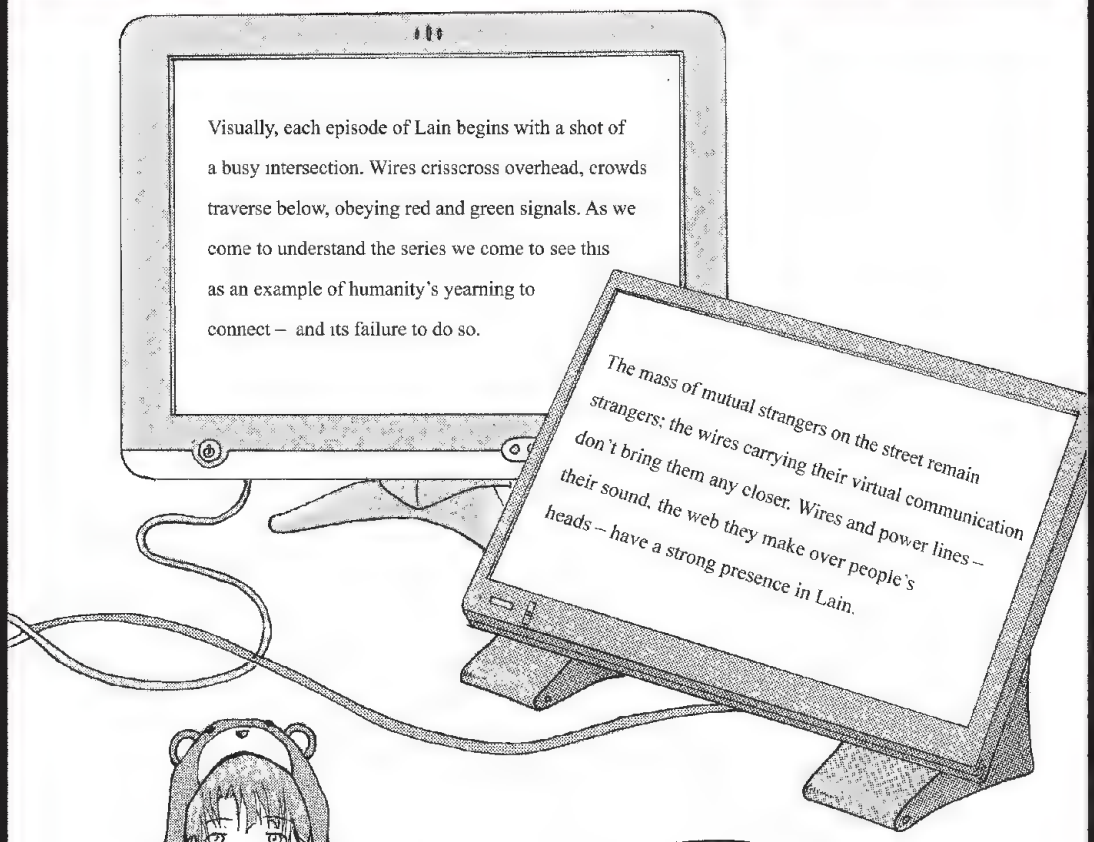

The desire to connect is another strong drive of the series.
Lain
is fundamentally a loner – at least in the real world.
In the Wired, however,
Lain's connectivity is unparalleled,
a property at the very core
of her nature.

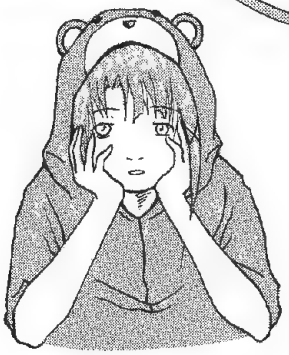

Elsewhere, we are told that "the Earth's human population is approaching the number of neurons in the brain". After Douglas Rushkoff, software engineer Eiri Masami strives to forge a collective neural net of all humans which would awaken the consciousness of the planet, much like the connection of neurons creates human consciousness[9]
Lain is the program that exists to execute the global connection Eiri strives for, by creating worldwide wireless access into the collective unconscious using the eight-hertz Schumann resonance frequency with which the globe vibrates[10]. This echoes the anxiety and excitement engendered by the potential of cyberspace, the possibility of a utopic levelling of society and a democratic all-connect.
As Richard Wise puts it, quoting British Prime Minister Tony Blair
"The new age of information offers possibilities for the future limited only by the boundaries of our imaginations. The potential of the new electronic networks is breathtaking..."[11]

[9] The view espoused in *Lain* is thus a functionalist one; in Rushkoff's theory, and in what Eiri attempts to put into practice, philosopher John Searle's famous *People of China* thought experiment is brought to fruition. In this thought experiment, each of China's billion people would be given a task that assigns them the simple status of a 'neuron' in a machine-table made to reproduce the human brain; it is often thought that, even if the whole of the population of China behaved like a single mind on these instructions, it would fail to be a mind, since it would lack qualitative states – feelings, sensations, emotions. Eiri's plan circumvents this issue by connecting the world's population not only behaviourally, but qualitatively as well – in fact, in every possible way.

[10] Human theta brain waves also tend to resonate at about eight hertz. Theta waves are often associated with trance states, and the subsonic 8 Hz frequency is said to be generated by instruments typically used in shamanic rituals.

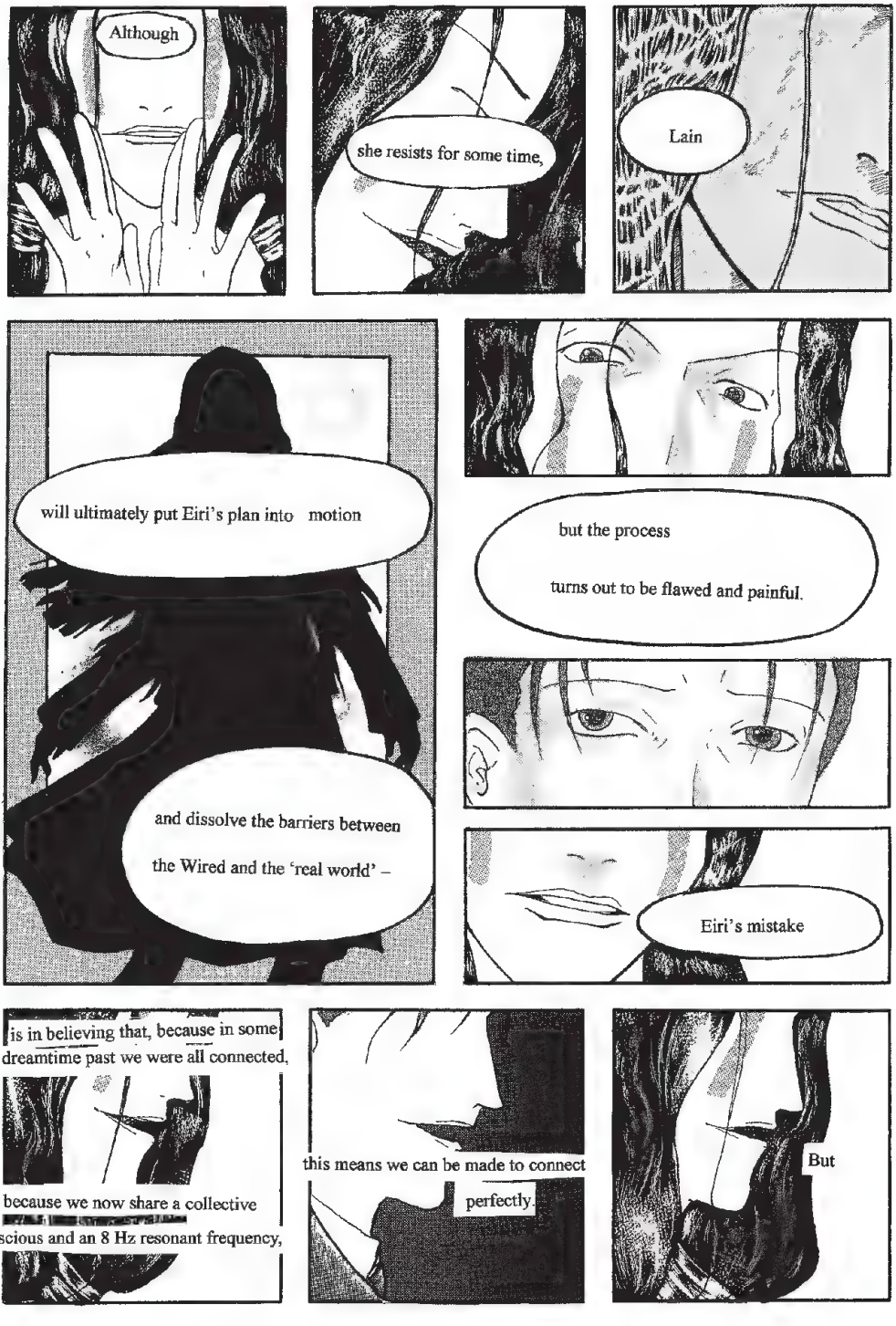
[11] Richard Wise, "The Myth of Cyberspace," in *Multimedia. A Critical Introduction* (Routledge, 2000), 184.

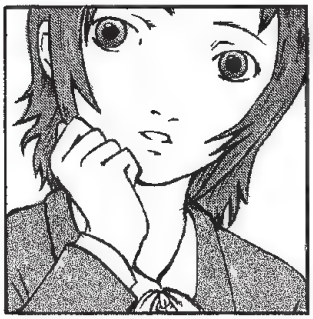

Visually, each episode of Lain begins with a shot of a busy intersection. Wires crisscross overhead, crowds traverse below, obeying red and green signals. As we come to understand the series we come to see this as an example of humanity's yearning to connect – and its failure to do so.
The mass of mutual strangers on the street remain strangers; the wires carrying their virtual communication don't bring them any closer. Wires and power lines – their sound, the web they make over people's heads – have a strong presence in Lain.



The possibility of melding with others is not new to the digital age. But the image coming through is that, although we want connection and seek each other out, because of the matter – the *medium* – of our bodies, we're doomed to fail.

This concern is nothing new, either. Human beings are both individual and social, and the tension between solitude and connection is one that we each carry within. Hence the focus on religion in *Lain*: much spiritual activity seeks to unite the self with some greater truth – God, the World, Nothingness or otherwise – and, if practiced in groups, to unite each partaker with the others, levelling selves in the sway of religion.


Although
she resists for some time,
Lain
will ultimately put Eiri's plan into motion
and dissolve the barriers between
the Wired and the 'real world' –
but the process
turns out to be flawed and painful.
Eiri's mistake
is in believing that, because in some
dreamtime past we were all connected,
and because we now share a collective
unconscious and an 8 Hz resonant frequency,
this means we can be made to connect
perfectly.
But

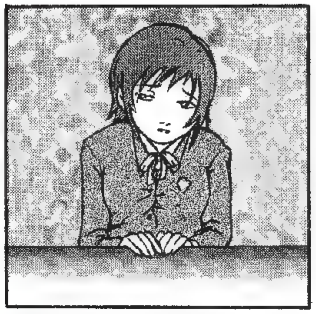


since humanity is not at a place in its evolution where this connection is natural,

people are broken instead of being enlightened.



Like Tima in Rintaro's 2001 movie *Metropolis (Metoroporisu)*, Lain will ultimately repair the wrongs of her programmer, destroying him and sacrificing herself in the process.



Lain brings about Eiri Masami's pure and utter Information Age, but with a twist:

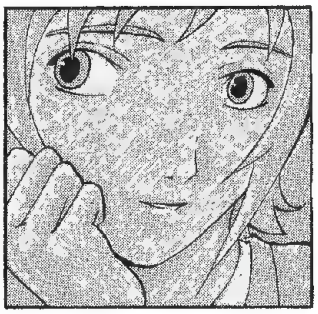


she effects an 'All- Reset',

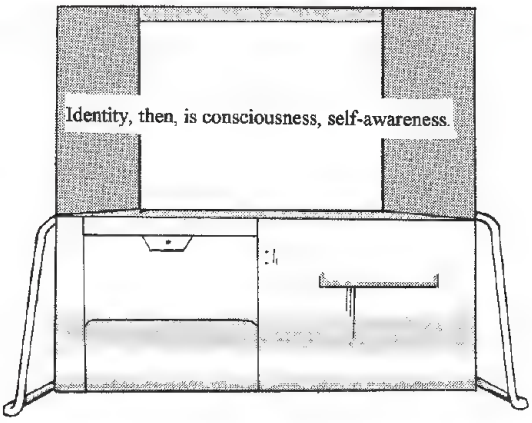
and proceeds to write him and herself out of reality.

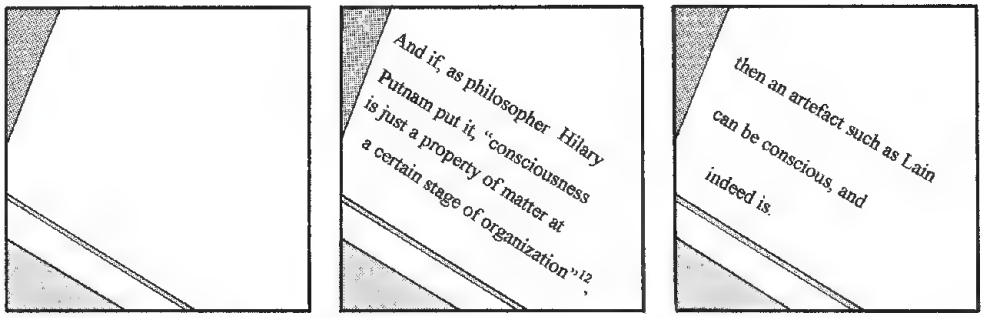


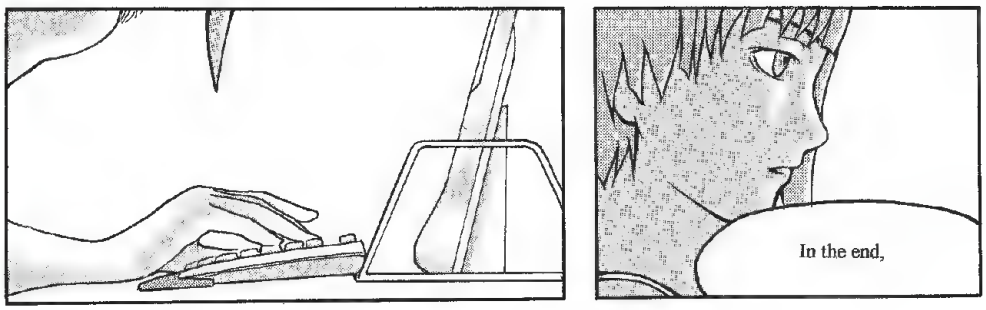
The consequent world, one in which Lain never existed, is indeed a utopic one This is expressed by the happy balance in which characters now live; even the dead have returned to life. Moreover, in the animation itself, the power lines whose din accompanied Lain's earlier travails now hum in harmony, and the 'real world' is now as vivid in colour as Lain's Wired once was.

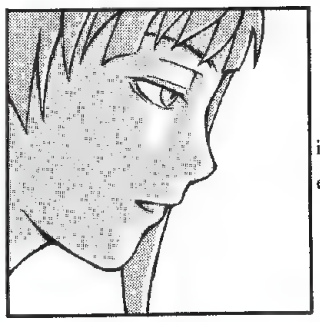



Digital media makes us ask the question asked by Lain, finally alone after having reset the world
"If I'm nowhere, who am I? Where am I?"
Delocalized, divorced from indexes of physical memory, identity becomes something mutable, in both good and bad ways. In one view, identity is just an overlap of the memories of others. But if the medium for that memory is volatile, as in *Lain* or in digital materials, then we lose the very proof of identity. So what is left? When Lain rewrites the world without herself in it, when all indexes of our existence vanish, when we are connected with no one, is there anything that remains, and remains 'us'?
Lain concludes,
"As long as I'm aware of myself",
"my true self is inside of me"



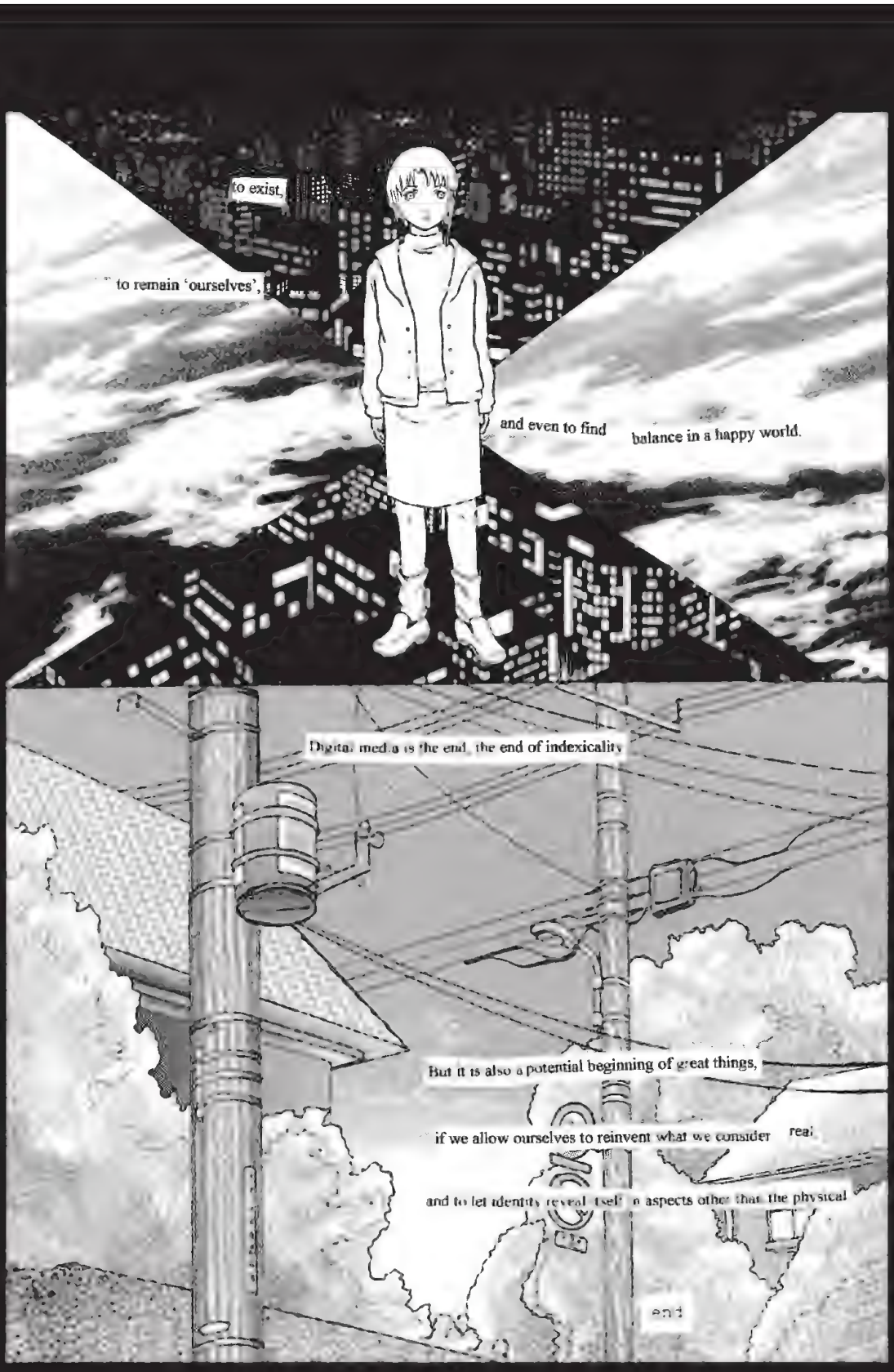

And if, as philosopher Hilary Putnam put it, "consciousness is just a property of matter at a certain stage of organization"[12],
then an artefact such as Lain can be conscious, and indeed is.





Lain's message is that although we are accustomed to basing our identity on physical tokens and the memories of those who know us, we will be able to exist just fine without these things –

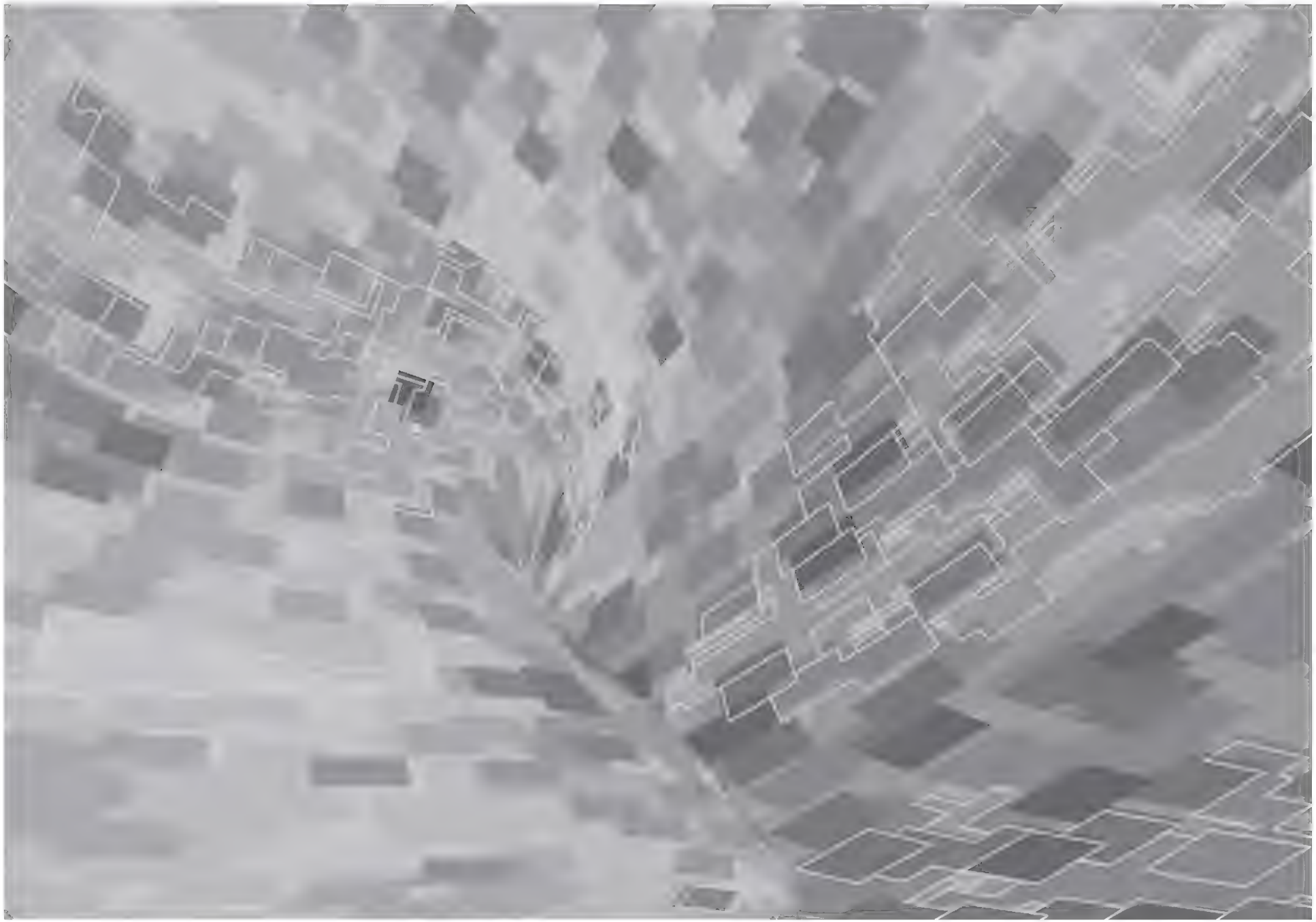
[12] Hilary Putnam, "Robots: Machines or Artificially Created Life?" in *Mind, Language and Reality* (Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 397.


to exist,
to remain 'ourselves',
and even to find
balance in a happy world.
Digital media is the end, the end of indexicality
But it is also a potential beginning of great things,
if we allow ourselves to reinvent what we consider real
and to let identity reveal itself in aspects other that the physical
end

人間で

Compossibles

Of the Human



TAKAYUKI TATSUMI

Translated by Christopher Bolton

Gundam and the Future of Japanoid Art

When I saw the Kubrick-conceived, Spielberg-directed film *AI* in the summer of 2001, I immediately thought of the Japanese mecha tradition from *Gundam* on down to *Evangelion*. *AI* is full of images that look like live-action realizations of anime's ideas—from the setting two thousand years hence, in a world emerging from the threat of nuclear weapons, to the submarine city in the final scenes.

In the same year, I wrote an afterword for the new paperback edition of *Tsuki ni mayu, chi ni wa kajitsu* (2000, Cocoons on the moon, fruit on the earth), a Gundam novel written by the popular fiction writer Fukui Harutoshi.[1] It was an assignment I eagerly accepted: Fukui had already gained acclaim as a talented new writer after winning a series of fiction prizes, including three prominent awards for his third novel *Bōkoku no iijisu* (Aimless aegis) in 1999.[2] But his reputation derived less from science fiction than from espionage novels centered on international intrigue. His books frequently addressed the justification for and latent power of Japan's armed forces in the context of the U.S.–Japan Joint Security Treaty. Still, it is not so surprising that a young author with an interest in military affairs would turn to Gundam, and Fukui puts his characteristic spin on the Gundam world,

highlighting issues associated with Japan's self-defense forces. (For example, it is in exchange for lunar technology necessary for self-defense that Gwen offers use of the battleship *Willgem* and the Turn A Gundams.)

About a month after the publication of the paperback edition of *Tsuki ni mayu*, the terrorist attacks of September 11 and the ensuing Iraq war renewed controversy over the role of Japan's self defense forces, and Fukui became a hotter property than ever. In sum, the anime imagination of future war, with its emphasis on mecha, meshed closely with the emergence of the war on terror and even seemed to anticipate its dynamics.

We can trace the history of the mecha back to Robert A. Heinlein's 1959 novel *Starship Troopers*, which introduced the concept of the "powered suit." The novel spawned a stormy ideological debate about whether Heinlein's ideas were fascist. In Japan, too, a violent dispute erupted between Yano Tetsu, the translator of the 1967 Japanese version, and the critic Ishikawa Kyōji. Needless to say, the impact of Heinlein on Japanese prose science fiction is complex and will continue to change. But *Starship Troopers* had another legacy: in 1977, Hayakawa publishers issued a paperback edition with a cover illustration of the powered suit drawn by Studio Nue (Figure 1), and this image would have a profound impact on the design of "mobile suits" in Japanese robot anime, starting with Gundam.[3]

THE ANIME IMAGINATION OF FUTURE WAR, WITH ITS EMPHASIS ON MECHA, MESHED CLOSELY WITH THE EMERGENCE OF THE WAR ON TERROR AND EVEN SEEMED TO ANTICIPATE ITS DYNAMICS.

Heinlein describes the suit as making its wearer look like "a big steel gorilla." The suit is compact enough to fit inside a small space capsule, but powerful enough that a single soldier can wipe out a tank division. Although it weighs two thousand pounds, the suit's advanced feedback and amplification technology do not require special training to use: it can sense what the wearer's body is trying to do and magnify it. The novel describes this as "controlled force . . . force controlled without your having to think about it. . . . that is the beauty of a powered suit: you don't have to think about it."[4] This idea of power without conscious thought surely had great appeal after the turmoil of the 1960s, during a new decade in which design philosophy gradually replaced political ideology, and the postwar emphasis on a politics of perseverance (manifested particularly in sports manga) gave way to an interest in cutting-edge aesthetics. Tired of agonizing over abstract problems with no solution or conclusion, people were entranced by a technology that symbolized such stylish agility—the mobility to outflank any opponent.



FIGURE 1. Powered suit illustration by Katō Naoyuki, one of several Studio Nue covers for the Hayakawa bunko edition of Robert A. Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*. These illustrations exerted an important influence on the visual tradition of Japanese mecha beginning with Gundam.

Today Japanese anime is a global phenomenon, and when an author with Fukui's political concerns turns to Gundam to question the dynamics of early twenty-first-century globalism, he inevitably resurrects some of the questions that Heinlein posed during the Cold War. But even today in the wake of September 11, the tendency to use science fiction novels as material for exploring ideological debates (so pronounced in the 1960s and 1970s) is on the wane. Fukui's screenplay for the 2005 remake of *G. I. Samurai* (1979, *Sengoku jieitai*), for example, is a quintessential piece of new century entertainment.[5]

In her "Cyborg Manifesto," Donna Haraway analyzed the status of the subject under hypercapitalism and linked the union of technology and the organic to the notion of racial and cultural hybridity as well. Haraway declared famously that "we are all chimeras . . . we are cyborgs."[6] But even if this is becoming a world of cyborgs, there is one place where cyborg subjectivity has been more thoroughly naturalized than anywhere else. That is the discursive space of Japan, which was stripped of its ideological certainties after World War II, forced to discard all but the shell of the traditional emperor system, and made to accept American democracy while donning the protective suit of the U.S.–Japan Joint Security Treaty. And if all Japanese have become cyborgs in this sense, then now they are also turning into virtual Japanese subjects that can be reproduced outside Japan. Fifteen years ago I started using the term "Japanoid" to describe this new subject.[7] Today as the East and West teem with *otaku*, we have ironically reached the point where we can declare that we are all Japanoids.

TODAY AS THE EAST AND WEST TEEM WITH *OTAKU*, WE HAVE IRONICALLY REACHED THE POINT WHERE WE CAN DECLARE THAT WE ARE ALL JAPANOIDS.

Fukui's alternate history novel *Shūsen no rōrerai* (2002, Lorelei at war's end) takes place in the final days of World War II, when the Japanese navy has acquired a German submarine with a secret weapon on board, a sensor array called the lorelei system that can track and display any ship on the battlefield. I can't help but think that the Lorelei System is an analog to the cyborgs of today's Gundam generation.[8] In this sense, Fukui's novel presents an incisive commentary on the postwar Japanese, and on the fate that has rendered them cyborgs or Japanoids. At the end of World War II, no one could have foreseen the strangely global significance that this Japanoid subject would assume fifty years later. If Fukui's twenty-first-century novel draws on cyborg theory to undertake a kind of New Historicist rereading of that era, then its view of the past may well hint at the future of Japanoid art.

RESPONSE

Christopher Bolton

It is ironic that Takayuki Tatsumi traces the origin of Gundam's distinctive visuals to *Starship Troopers,* because whatever else that novel is, it is resolutely verbal. Even when it is not preaching its particular political philosophy, Heinlein's narrative is virtually devoid of visual descriptions. This contrasts sharply with the visual richness of Gundam, something that was on display at a recent Japanese exhibition of Gundam-inspired contemporary art. Tatsumi's essay appeared in the catalog for this exhibition, titled *Gundam Generating Futures: Kitarubeki mirai no tame ni* (Figure 2).[9] The show (curated by Azumaya Takashi) toured several Japanese museums from 2005 to 2007, and I saw it in spring 2007 at the newly opened Kyoto International Manga Museum.[10]

The venue was certainly appropriate to the show: the museum—a joint project by Kyoto Seika University and the city of Kyoto—has a research and reading collection of hundreds of thousands of prewar, postwar, and contemporary Japanese comics, all housed in the former Tatsuike Elementary School building downtown. On the lower level, older or rarer materials sit on rows of compact shelving in a climate-controlled space, but the upper levels preserve the nostalgic feel of the old elementary school, with patrons of various ages wandering through halls and former classrooms that are now lined with shelves of manga. When I was there, the visitors reading on the spacious (if artificial) lawn outside were watched over by a giant mecha stenciled on the museum windows, the icon of the Gundam exhibit (Figure 3).

As if taking their cue from this initial image, several pieces in the show inside used effects of scale to underline the intimacy and alienation Gundam fans feel toward these humanoid shells or machines. One room was completely filled with a huge plaster sculpture of the series's character Sayla Mass, six meters long and almost three meters high. The figure (by Nishio Yasuyuki) was down on her hands and knees, her mouth twisted in a grimace, her stomach gaping open to reveal a life-sized cockpit. Also playing on the size of the machines, calligrapher Yokoyama Hōran created a giant wooden writing brush in the shape of the outsized beam rifles carried by the mobile suits. Yokoyama also contributed a scroll with dialogue from the series rendered in archaic *hentaigana* calligraphy, and there were other pieces that combined traditional fine arts with avant-pop: Tenmyōya Hisashi produced a screen painting of the iconic RX-78-2 model suit in the style of the Edo-period Kanō school, complete with gold leaf background. (This inversion of past and



FIGURE 2 (LEFT). Gundam exhibit flyer.

FIGURE 3 (BELOW). Interior of the Kyoto International Manga Museum. The building mixes modern architectural elements, like this elevated bridge and the glass wall at right, with traditional features that recall the building's origins as an elementary school. Parts of the interior preserve the classrooms, hallways, wooden stairs, and other features of the prewar school, adding an element of childhood nostalgia that seems inseparable from the manga experience. Photograph by Christopher Bolton.

future and the notion of a traditional tomorrow correspond to an important current in Tatsumi's work, which often treats the way that Japanese "derivations" trump their so-called originals; for example, the complex web of Gundam influences and appropriations traced in the present essay undermines any simple notion of original and copy.)

Elsewhere in the exhibition and the catalog, artists took up the Gundam franchise in digital photography, abstract sculpture, graphic art, and participatory installations, with effects that ranged from playful through darkly pessimistic to simply ironic. Tokiwa Hibiki's photo series "a girl in the room with acguy" depicted a fetching model posing with thousands of LP records, including several with Gundam images on the record jackets. Tokiwa's provocative but clearly staged photographs address the notion of *otaku* fantasy more directly than most of the other art. And his image of the young person standing before a wall of records actually resembles the scenes of young people browsing shelves of manga elsewhere in the museum. But Tokiwa's was certainly not the only piece to hold a mirror up to the viewer, nor was the giant Sayla Mass sculpture with its open stomach cockpit the only installation that tempted patrons to literally enter inside the art.

Tatsumi's notion of cyborg identity includes the way humans absorb and become absorbed by technology as well as a broader kind of cultural amalgamation, but it also embraces the ways the stories of our own lives merge with fiction to produce new hybrid narratives. In his writing, this is sometimes expressed with autobiographical anecdotes, like the personal experiences of 2001 that structure this essay. In the Gundam exhibition, the pieces by Tokiwa, Nishio, and other artists engaged patrons personally in this same kind of narrative and bodily dialogue with the art. In that respect the exhibition represents at least one fascinating trajectory of the Japanoid art that Tatsumi describes.

Notes

1. Fukui Harutoshi, *Tsuki ni mayu, chi ni wa kajitsu* (Cocoons on the moon, fruit on the earth), 3 *bunkobon* vols. (Tokyo: Gentōsha, 2001). Based on the ∀ *Gundam* or *Turn A Gundam* series, this novel was originally published in 2000 with the title *Taan Ee Gandamu* (Turn A Gundam), 2 vols. (Tokyo: Haruki Noberusu).

2. In 1997, Fukui's first long novel *Kawa no fukasa ni* (How deep is your river, Mr. guard?) was a nominee for the Edogawa Rampō prize for mystery and fantasy, and he won the prize the following year with his second novel *Twelve Y.O.* In 1999 *Bōkoku no Iijisu* scored a triple sweep: the second Ōyabu Haruhiko prize and the annual prizes from the

Mystery Writers of Japan, Inc., and the Japan Adventure Fiction Association. (All three novels were published by Kōdansha in Tokyo.)

3. Robert Heinlein, *Starship Troopers* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959); translated by Yano Tetsu as *Uchū no senshi* (Tokyo: Hayakawa Bunko, 1977). For a brief discussion of Heinlein's significance for Japanese science fiction, see the introduction to *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams: Japanese Science Fiction from Origins to Anime,* ed. Christopher Bolton, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., and Tatsumi Takayuki (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007). [There was also a *Starship Troopers* anime OVA released in 1988. It was produced by Sunrise, the studio that made the *Gundam* anime, and its director, Amino Tetsurō, worked on the storyboards for the *Mobile Suit Zeta Gundam* and *Turn A Gundam* series. —Trans., with thanks to Brian Ruh]

4. Heinlein, *Starship Troopers,* 123–26.

5. *Sengoku jieitai,* dir. Saitō Mitsumasa (1979); translated as *G. I. Samurai,* VHS (Xenon, 2002); *Sengoku jieitai 1579,* dir. Tezuka Masaaki, screenplay by Fukui Harutoshi (2005). Both films were based on Hanmura Ryō's 1971 novel *Sengoku jieitai* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Bunko, 2005).

6. Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 150.

7. Takayuki Tatsumi, *Japanoido sengen* (A Japanoid manifesto) (Tokyo: Hayakawa Shobō, 1993).

8. [Fukui's novel was made into a live-action film in 2005 that featured the contributions of many notable names in Japanese anime, including Higuchi Shinji, Oshii Mamoru, Izubuchi Yutaka, Anno Hideaki, and *Gundam*'s own Tomino Yoshiyuki. —Trans., with thanks to Brian Ruh]

9. Takayuki Tatsumi, "Japanoido aato no mirai" (The future of Japanaoid art), in *Gundam Generating Futures: Kitarubeki mirai no tame ni* (For the future that should come), ed. Sugawa Yoshiyuki, Hattori Reiji, and Azumaya Takashi (Tokyo: Sōtsū, 2005), 102–3.

10. http://kyotomm.com.

TERI SILVIO

Pop Culture Icons: Religious Inflections of the Character Toy in Taiwan

The figure of the religious icon has played a prominent role in theories of modern consumer culture. In European theory, the icon is often invoked as a metaphor for various ambivalent losses that accompany the spread of capitalism, what Max Weber called disenchantment, the replacement of the divine with the secular as the anchor of meaning. Walter Benjamin's thesis that the aura of the work of art is lost in mechanical reproduction is based on the comparison of mass culture images with religious art and artifacts. Perhaps the theorist who makes the comparison between consumer culture images and religious icons most explicitly is Jean Baudrillard. In an early passage in his famous essay on "The Precession of Simulacra," Baudrillard asks:

> What becomes of the divinity when it reveals itself in icons, when it is multiplied in simulacra? . . . It can be seen that the iconoclasts, who are often accused of despising and denying images, were in fact the ones who accorded them their actual worth, unlike the iconolaters, who saw in them only reflections and were content to venerate God at one remove. But the converse can also be said, namely that the iconolaters possessed the most modern and adventurous minds, since, underneath the idea of the apparition of God

> in the mirror of images, they already enacted his death and his disappearance in the epiphany of his representations.[1]

Although there are certainly other traditions within Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the idea of the icon as an "apparition" reflects what Alfred Gell identifies as the triumph of Protestant anti-mimesis ideology in the West.[2] For Benjamin and Baudrillard, the Real has the qualities of the God of Abraham—nonhuman, unique, indivisible, and unrepresentable. As simulacra embody the opposite of the qualities of the divine, their mimesis and multiplication thus lead to an increased sense of unreality in the contemporary world.

In Taiwan as well, the image of the religious icon has become a powerful trope for the multiple transformations of late capitalism. Taiwanese artist Yang Maolin gave this trope concrete form in his sculpture series "Ceremonies before Rewarding: Inviting the Immortals III" (2003, Feng Shen zhi Qian Xi—Qing Zhong Xian III) and "Canonization of the Gods—the Pure Land of Maha" (2006, Feng Shen Yan Yi—Ma Ha—Ji Le Shijie). The pieces are of hand-carved wood and cast bronze, and they look, from a distance, like classical Buddhist icons—figures seated in lotus position, reclining, or in martial stances, some overarched by halos spiked with stylized flames. But up close, the figures in the center are revealed to be characters from popular Japanese anime or from the Walt Disney repertoire—in other words, the sculptures' forms conflate Buddhist god-icons with the mass-produced plastic "character toys" sold in stationery and toy stores throughout East Asia.

Yang Maolin's literalization of the trope of the "pop culture icon" might easily be read as an absurdist critique of contemporary culture's secularization and commercialization. Yang, however, claims that he does not see his statues in this way:

> Since 1996, I have incorporated cartoon and animation characters into my art. You could say that, within my work, they are the most meaningful images. In the earliest period, I thought about discourse from the angle of "the penetration and influence of colonial culture vs. the creation and establishment of subjective culture." I used these images of "foreign culture" and "subculture" as a

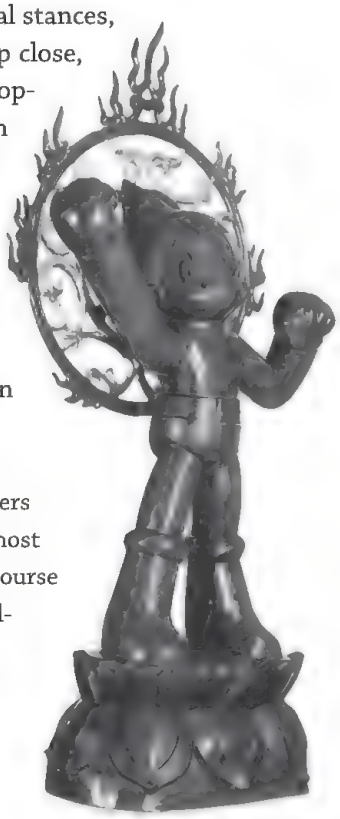


FIGURE 1. Yang Maolin's "Astro Bodhisattva" (*Yuanzi Xiao Pusa*), 2003. Photograph reproduced with permission of the artist.

metaphor for the so-called "immortals" in traditional folk culture. Some people thought this type of comparison had a satirical flavor; they thought I "maintained an allegorical, critical attitude towards hybrid culture." . . . Not only do I not maintain an allegorical, critical attitude toward hybrid culture, to the contrary, I see hybrid, bastardized culture as a beautiful contingency, something worthy of praise and promotion. . . . When I look at these adorable, familiar cartoon characters in such otherworldly, transcendent attitudes, solemnly making the hand gestures of the bodhisattvas, I smile, and feel at peace.[3]



FIGURE 2. Taiwanese books and magazines by and for character-toy collectors. Photograph by author.

The same trope that indexes the loss of any transcendent reality for Baudrillard indexes the "beautiful contingencies" of contemporary globalization for Yang.

WHAT DO CHARACTER TOYS AND TAIWANESE RELIGIOUS ICONS ACTUALLY HAVE IN COMMON?

Religious traditions provide an important lens through which people interpret the transformations of capitalism, even (or especially) in places where those traditions are already objects of nostalgia. In this paper, I want to examine how local religious traditions shape Taiwanese readings of what it means to live in a postindustrial, globally networked society. Specifically, I want to ask, what do character toys and Taiwanese religious icons actually have in common? What are the specific inflections of the "pop icon" trope in the context of a society where a syncretic blend of Taoism, Buddhism, and folk belief is the dominant religious tradition? In other words, how is the proliferation of simulacra experienced where idol worship is not a historical heresy but everyday practice—where the divine was never conceived as absolutely separate from the human, never unique or indivisible, and never unrepresentable?

I approach these questions ethnographically, by comparing how Taiwanese people interact with and talk about religious icons and character toys. My analysis is based on fieldwork over the past two years with a variety of toy collectors in Taiwan, including a survey of consumers at one of Taipei's main character toy markets and interviews with collectors, designers, and merchants. My understanding of Taiwanese attitudes toward religious icons is based primarily on the work of other ethnographers and on interviews with icon carvers and with sellers and collectors of antique icons.

Several scholars have noted a religious background to the content of Japanese manga, anime, and games. As Anne Allison summarizes, "fed in part by folkloric and religious traditions, an animist sensibility percolates the modern landscape of Japan today . . . in postwar properties like Tetsuwan Atomu, for example, one sees a universe where the borders between thing and life continually cross and intermesh."[4] In this paper, I am not so much concerned with the types and forms of these media characters as with their functions—how the place of icons within Taiwanese folk religion influences Taiwanese consumers' conception of the ontology of media characters in general and how they structure community.[5]

I will begin my explication of the pop culture icon trope by first looking at how mass-produced character toys are placed discursively within a continuum of human-form images that link them to icons. Second, I will compare how Taiwanese worshippers value and interact with icons with how Taiwanese fan

collectors value and interact with characters and character toys. Finally, I outline some of the implications of these differences for Taiwanese experiences and interpretations of globalization and the postmodern condition.

THE *ANG-A* CONTINUUM

The practice of icon worship was brought to Taiwan by settlers from the Chinese provinces of Fujian and Guangdong, who immigrated in waves between the seventeenth century and 1945. The descendants of these settlers currently make up approximately 80 percent of the island's population. The mother tongue of 70 percent of the population is the Hokkien (Minnan) dialect, or Holo; another 15 percent are of the Hakka minority. When the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) took over the island from the Japanese at the end of World War II, they instituted Mandarin, developed from the dialect of Beijing, as the "national language." Most of my younger informants speak primarily Mandarin but understand Holo; informants in their late twenties or older often speak Holo at home with older relatives and a mixture of Mandarin and Holo with friends and at work.

ICON WORSHIP IS A PART OF DAILY LIFE FOR THE MAJORITY OF YOUNG, URBAN, CHARACTER TOY CONSUMERS IN TAIWAN.

My informants generally viewed themselves as part of a secular, "scientific" generation, and tended to see icon worship more as a nostalgic cultural tradition than a matter of personal belief. In general, icon worship, like the Holo dialect, is a part of daily life for the majority of young, urban, character toy consumers in Taiwan, associated with private family life, but it is not, as it often is for older, working-class, and rural Taiwanese, an important part of their social life or personal identities.[6] It is precisely as a kind of unnoticed domestic background, rather than conscious belief, that the religiously inflected categories of Holo language influence interpretations of the character toy market.

In Holo, character toys are called "*ang-a*."[7] The term *ang-a* refers to almost any small image of a person, or of an animal or object invested with human features and a human personality. *Ang-a* most often refers to three-dimensional figurines, but sometimes also to two-dimensional figures. Comic books, first introduced during the Japanese colonial era, are called *ang-a chhe,* or "*ang-a* books." The category of *ang-a* brings together a number of different kinds of objects that have separate names in Mandarin (or are called

by loan words from Japanese, English, and Cantonese). These include not only a wide variety of mass-produced character toys imported from Japan (or cheaper pirate versions produced in the People's Republic of China [PRC]) and limited-edition "designer toys" (mostly imported from Hong Kong and the United States) but also icons that have been desacralized or that have not yet been sacralized.

The most common referent for the term *ang-a* is the puppet, and I see puppets as the middle ground linking religious tradition to the commercial toy market. Taiwanese puppets are related to icons in several ways. Puppet performances are a common feature of religious rituals. Marionette performance, or *kui lei xi / ka-lei-hi,*[8] is used in Taiwan almost exclusively for funeral and exorcism rituals. The most popular type of puppetry in Taiwan, *bu dai xi / po-te-hi,* or hand-puppet theater, has been one of the most common entertainments for both gods and humans at temple festivals since the Qing dynasty. Many of the characters in traditional *bu dai xi* plays are gods, bodhisattvas, immortals, or historical persons who later were deified. Some of these divine characters also appear in manga, anime, and video games (for example, Guan Yu, the Three Kingdoms–era general later deified as Guan Gong, the god of war, literature, and wealth, appears in all of these genres).



FIGURE 3. A display of character toys in a Taiwanese collector's home. Photograph by author.

Traditional *bu dai xi* puppeteers observe taboos around puppets of divine characters; those puppets used for the *ban xian / pan sian,* a ritual performance for the gods at temple festivals, must be handled with particular care. One antique puppet dealer told me that he had seen a troupe of puppeteers in Fujian worshipping a sacralized marionette of Tian Du Yuanshuai, the god of actors.

If puppets are linked to god-icons through historical practice and folk belief, they are also commercial products. Puppets have been one of the most popular toys for Taiwanese boys since the Qing dynasty. Many collectors of character toys, especially men, fondly remembered puppets as their earliest childhood toys. Since the 1970s, when *bu dai xi* was adapted to the television serial format, television puppetry characters have become local "pop culture idols," often compared with characters from Japanese and American animation. In the early 1990s, the Pili International Multimedia Company began producing its "digital video knights-errant *bu dai xi*" serials. Images of the Pili characters are currently reproduced and sold as wooden puppets, plastic dolls, vinyl toys, as well as a wide range of other products.

Puppets are also the middle ground between icons and character toys in a continuum of producers to consumers. Wooden puppets and religious icons



FIGURE 4. Interior of a Pili puppet boutique. Photograph by author.

are often hand-carved by the same people.[9] In my research, I found that collectors of antique icons often collected antique puppets as well. I also found that many collectors of antique puppets also collected modern puppets, including Pili characters. And many fans of the Pili serials who collected Pili puppets and toys were also fans of Japanese manga and anime and collected Japanese character toys.

ON THE ONTOLOGY OF GODS AND CARTOON CHARACTERS

Chinese gods are believed to exist in several different places, or states, simultaneously. They are said to be "all around," watching over the human world, but also to be living in a parallel world of the dead, where they are officials in a hierarchical imperium. In another sense, gods exist within the realm of narrative, as characters in stories. Prasenjit Duara has characterized Chinese god-cults as "interpretive arenas" developed over time through a process he calls "superscription:"

> In this process, extant versions are not totally wiped out. Rather, images and sequences common to most versions of the myth are preserved, but by adding or "rediscovering" new elements or by giving existing elements a particular slant, the new interpretation is lodged in place. Even if the new interpretation should become dominant, previous versions do not disappear but instead come into a new relationship with it, as their own statuses and roles within what might be called the "interpretive arena" of the myth come to be negotiated and redefined.[10]

MEDIA FANS IN TAIWAN, LIKE AMERICAN, EUROPEAN, AND JAPANESE SCI-FI AND ANIME FANS, ACTIVELY CONSTRUCT NARRATIVES AND IMAGES OF THE CHARACTERS FAR BEYOND THOSE PRODUCED BY THE MASS MEDIA.

Media characters likewise exist within an interpretive arena of overlapping and contradictory stories. In my interviews with them, toy merchants and an agent who brokered the rights to reproduce Japanese and Korean character images told me that in order for a character to become popular in Taiwan, it must have a background story. This, they claimed, is why manga and anime tie-in products sell best. Media fans in Taiwan, like American, European, and Japanese sci-fi and anime fans, actively construct narratives and

images of the characters far beyond those produced by the mass media.[11] Fans write backstories for the characters and place them into new situations and new relationships. They usually see their own fiction and art as drawing out aspects of the characters that are "hidden" within the original serials, rather than pure invention. The shared imagination of media characters' "personalities" are abstracted from fans' own circulating narratives and images as well as from the original comics and videos. In many fan performances I observed during my fieldwork, Pili characters were represented as if they were star actors who "play themselves" within the Pili serials, sometimes chafing at the whimsical orders of the scriptwriters or seeking their own means of winning over fans so that the scriptwriters would be forced to give them "larger roles." Like gods, then, media characters may be thought of as having lives of their own in another, parallel world.

"IDOLIZING" GODS AND MEDIA CHARACTERS: EMBODIMENT AND AGENCY

In contrast to Japan, where the English loan word *aidoru* is often used for media "idols," the key term in the Taiwanese metaphor is taken from classical Chinese compound word for icon—*ouxiang*, or "copy-image." Fans watch "idol dramas" (*ouxiang ju*) from Japan and Korea and are said to "worship (media) idols" (*chongbai ouxiang*) or to "idolize" (*ouxiang hua*) mass media characters. These phrases are used as much by fans as by critical outsiders. I believe the use of the term *ouxiang* implies not so much that Taiwanese fans think of media characters as being "like gods" but that they think of character toys as "copy-images" of fictional characters in the same way that icons are "copy-images" of gods.

Significantly, the *ou* in *ouxiang* is also used in the Mandarin terms for puppets (*mu ou*) and toy figurines (*wan ou, ren ou*). One of the main functions of icons and *ang-a* is to bring the gods or characters out of the realm of pure narrative, out of the "other world" where they usually reside, and make them available for interaction with human beings. According to Lin Weipin, Taiwanese icons, called *kim sin* (golden bodies) in Holo or *shen xiang* (god images) in Mandarin, serve to concretize, or embody, the god, allowing worshippers a means to communicate with him or her.[12] The god's embodiment in the icon is accomplished first through the rituals for carving the icon and installing it on the home or temple altar. These rituals vary from place to place, but the process always includes:

"THE ICON IS THE GOD'S SHELL-BODY (*SHEN KE*), WHERE THE GOD'S SOUL (*LING HUN*) RESIDES."

1. *ru shen / lu sen* (bringing in the god): In this ritual, done after the icon is completely carved, a number of objects are sealed into a hole in the back of the icon. This ritual brings the god's *ling* (power, or efficacy) into the icon. If the icon represents an already existing god, the incense ash from the burner of another icon of that god is placed in the hole; if the god is a new one, the ash is replaced with a *fu*, a paper Taoist charm. Other items symbolically give the god in the icon life force. These items may vary for different gods and in different places but often include the five grains and a live wasp or the fresh blood of a rooster.

2. *kai guang dian yan / khai kung* (opening the light by dotting the eyes): This ritual is done after a ritual specialist has selected the most auspicious place for the icon to reside in the temple or home and the most auspicious time for it to be installed. This ritual marks the transition from *ang-a* to icon. Only after its eyes have been opened is the statue said to "have a god" (*you shen / u sen*).[13]

Icons are worshipped through the lighting of incense and sometimes the offering of food. Once the incense has been lit, the worshipper may speak directly to the god. This may be practiced daily (as in home altars to Guan Yin, the Buddhist goddess of mercy, or in shop altars to Guan Gong), according to lunar calendrical rituals (as in major temple festivals), or on an irregular basis (for example, requests for a sickness to be healed or for a child to pass her exams). If people fail to worship an icon, the god will leave it. If this happens, icons may be resacralized through redoing the eye-opening ritual.

As Lin points out, these rituals invest the icon with what Alfred Gell calls "internal agency" (the sense that the god is physically dwelling within the icon, that the icon is alive) and "external agency" (the sense that the icon can be treated as a social being). The agency of icons includes two aspects: *ling* (or divine power) and personality.

Liu Wensan, a seminal scholar on local religion and collector of icons, describes the relationship between gods and icons this way:

> The icon is the god's shell-body (*shen ke*), where the god's soul (*ling hun*) resides. The same god can have many icons, because the gods' souls (*shen ling*) are limitless. They can divide their divine power (*shen ling*) from their souls (*ling hun*) and send it into their icons, to protect and bless the believers in every district.[14]

THE PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTING A COMMUNICATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MEDIA CHARACTER THROUGH ITS MATERIAL EMBODIMENT IN THE TOY BEGINS WITH THE GAZE.

The term that Liu (and others) uses for the soul of a god is the same as that used for the human soul (*ling hun*). As David Jordan noted in his influential work on Taiwanese folk religion, Taiwanese worship three types of supernatural beings—gods, ghosts, and ancestors—and the line between these three is porous.[15] Virtually all of the gods worshipped in Taiwanese temples, both Buddhist and folk Taoist, are historical persons who were deified after their death. Most gods are thus also ancestors, and ancestors may become gods. Ghosts are the souls of the dead who have not been properly worshipped by their descendents (or who have none to worship them). Ancestors may become "wandering ghosts" if worship is discontinued; ghosts may become ancestors again if they are rediscovered (e.g., through dreams or divination) and worship resumed.

The term *ling* is most often translated as *power* or *efficacy*; it is the power manifest in miracles and accurate prognostications by diviners or spirit mediums. *Ling* is quantitative; icons are said to have more or less of it. There is another aspect of the soul that is not quantitative but qualitative and individual. As Daniel C. S. Chen notes, "the concept of ling-hun contains an important element better translated as 'personality' than 'soul.'"[16] Thus, sudden changes in a person's habitual affect are often explained in terms of the soul having been "frightened" from the body (*xia hun / kia hun*). Gods, like persons, have distinctive personalities, and the faces of icons symbolically express their character traits. The two aspects of the god's soul—*ling* and *hun*, power and personality—are intertwined in the icon.

Both the threat and the promise of the simulacra, the ambivalence of secularization, are bound up in the idea of souls without *ling*. Media characters and toys do not have *ling*. Nonetheless, collectors do, in various ways, treat character toys as if they have personalities and agency. And how fans invest character toys with internal and external agency parallels in some striking ways how worshippers interact with icons.

As with icons, the process of constructing a communicative relationship with the media character through its material embodiment in the toy begins with the gaze. Many collectors told me that an *ang-a*'s most important feature, that which makes it seem alive, is its *yan shen*. *Yan shen* literally means "eye-god," and the term is similar to the Hindu concept of *darsan*, the icon's gaze that accepts the worshipper's devotion and blesses the beholding/beheld worshipper.[17] Many collectors report that they bought a puppet or figurine

only after they felt it was looking at them; this sensed reciprocal gaze is the primary marker of *yuan fen,* or a fated relationship between the *ang-a* and the collector. The idea that consumer items somehow "call out" to collectors is hardly unique to Taiwan, and I am sure that doll and figurine collectors throughout the world may experience some form of the mutual gaze. What I am interested in here is that the discourse of *yan shen* and *yuan fen* link this experience of consumer culture explicitly to local religious traditions.

As with icons, bringing the character toy home and displaying it allows the character to become embedded in personal and communal relationships. One Pili fan wrote the following on a Web site I set up (January–December 2004):

> My first puppet was an 18 inch "White Knight" [one of a series of mass-produced Pili puppets sold through 7-11 convenience stores in 2004]. . . . When I first saw it I was surprised by its beauty, it was like the original, but even more slim and handsome! I used to feel that people who bought an "ou" and brought it home were really crazy, a friend of mine even described it . . . it's carrying a miniature "icon" (the kind that go through the streets in processions) home to worship! (I hope this doesn't offend anyone.) But, after I got my 18 inch "White Knight," it gave me a kind of "tasteful collection" pleasure! [ellipsis and quotation marks in original]



FIGURE 5. Display of Pili puppets in a collector's home. Photograph by author.

Another fan responded: "Actually, I also feel that when we buy a puppet and place it in our home, taking care of it in all sorts of ways, it really does feel a bit like an icon." Although I have never heard a collector of Japanese character toys make an explicit analogy between toys and icons, they, like puppet collectors, often refer to buying character products as "bringing Doraemon (or whatever character) home."

Xiao Hong (a pseudonym) is an officer of a fan club dedicated to one of the stars of the Pili puppetry serials. When I interviewed her in 2006, she was twenty-nine years old, working as the secretary for her family's small retail firm. Around three years before, she had started to collect Pili character "Xiao Yu wawa"—plastic dolls about eight inches tall, with oversized heads, huge round eyes, and tiny O-shaped mouths, which are fitted with specially made costumes, wigs, and accessories to look like various heroes of the Pili puppetry serials. At the time I interviewed her, she had purchased nine of the dolls, each one a different character. She and her friends tried to buy different characters, so that they could create a wide variety of scenarios with them, and they frequently sent their dolls to each other's homes to "stay over." I asked her how she interacted with the dolls. She said:

> I kiss each one every night, only then can I sleep. I used to sleep holding my Yi Ye Shu doll . . . Yes, I talk to them; I tell them everything. They watch the Pili videos with me. If the plot of the video makes me angry, I'll scold them for their bad behavior. If they do cute things in the videos, I'll kiss them . . .

Both Pili puppet and character toy collectors often say that Doraemon (or the White Knight et al.) is a "member of the family." Pili fans even jokingly call their puppets "my daughter" or "my son," or more commonly "our family's (*women jia de*) White Knight." As with members of temple associations, whose icons reside in a different home each year, fans tend to use the trope of fictive kinship to define their community. Fans often call and refer to their fan friends as "sister" or "brother."

BEN ZUN AND *FEN SHEN*: THE GENEALOGICAL METAPHOR

I have argued that, due to the similarities between the "superscription" of myths and the overlapping arena of official and fan narratives, Pili puppetry fan culture embodies an imagination of globalization as a process that parallels the expansion of Chinese god-cults.[18] Judging from the diversity and abundance of media-fan fiction (*tong ren zhi*) in Taiwan, I would argue that this holds for manga, anime, and game fandoms as well. Here I want to note another parallel between god-cults and fandom, the role that the reproduction of three-dimensional "copy-images" plays in expanding the territory of communities.

Bernard Faure writes that

> [The] aura [of Buddhist icons] is often explained as resulting from an unbroken line of mimesis and contact between the first icon and its later reproductions—the power of this first icon, the Udayana image, itself owing to its resemblance to and contact with the Buddha himself.[19]

In Taiwan, Taoist icons' histories of mimesis and contact are also traced back through the incense taken from the burner of an "original" icon and placed within another during the *ru shen / lu sen* or "inviting the god in" ritual. Regardless of whether the god represented is associated with the Buddhist or Taoist pantheon, this process is called *fen xiang / hun siang* or "dividing the incense." The relationship between the original icon and those that contain its incense ashes is described in terms of a matrilineal metaphor; they are "mother" and "child" icons; when a local temple icon is brought back to the temple with the icon from which its internal incense was taken, it is said to "return to its mother's home" (*hui niang jia*).[20] In Holo, the term for a "mother" icon is *ben zun / pun chun*, the "original eminence"; the term for its "children" is *fen shen / hun sen* or "divided bodies."



FIGURE 6. A side altar in the Di Cang Wang Temple in the Wanhua District of Taipei, featuring large and small icons of the god Bei Ji Da Di (with black face and black beard) and small icons of several other gods. Photograph by author.

UNLIKE GOD-ICONS OR PUPPETS, FIGURINES OF MANGA, ANIME, AND GAME CHARACTERS ARE NOT BELIEVED TO DESCEND FROM AN "ORIGINAL" TOY.

The same measure word used for icons, *zun,* is also frequently used for puppets, especially by puppeteers and fans. Fans of the Pili serials refer to the puppets used in the videos and films as the "*ben zun.*" When Pili fans purchase a puppet replica of their favorite character, they usually want it to look as much like the *ben zun* as possible. A form of "contagious magic" is also evident in Pili fans' values for *fen shen* puppets; puppets made by the same carver who carved the original and costumes that were cut from the same bolt of cloth as the costume used in the videos are most valued.

Unlike god-icons or puppets, figurines of manga, anime, and game characters are not believed to descend from an "original" toy. Character-toy collectors do, however, use the metaphor of descent, but they trace toys back to two-dimensional, rather than three-dimensional, originals—or, perhaps more accurately, to the images of the "original" characters they have distilled from the interpretive arena of official and unofficial narratives and images.

For most fan collectors of Japanese character toys, copyrighted toys (*zheng ban*) are more valued than pirated (*dao ban*) ones, and many collectors will only buy copyrighted ones. The copyright tag is not, however, valued as a legal guarantee—none of the collectors I interviewed were at all concerned with the protection of intellectual property rights. Rather, copyright was seen as a likely guarantee of mimetic closeness to the original character. Fans usually claimed that copyrighted products are more *jing zhi* (refined) than pirated ones. This is not only because they usually have higher quality craftsmanship but because they are seen to be more precise simulations. Xie Yuqi, the author of *Duo-la-A-meng Shoucang Da Ji He* (Doraemon collector's set), claims:

> You can measure the quality (*jing zhi*) [of a toy] from the following: What material is it made of? *Does its appearance [zaoxing] faithfully represent the special characteristics of the cartoon?* Are the small parts detailed? . . . *For me, the most important thing to consider is whether the product brings out Doraemon's special qualities.*[21]

Xie also describes copyrighted Doraemon toys as "products with a Japanese bloodline" (*riben xuetong de shangpin*).[22] Here she follows the genealogical metaphor of the icon; copyright, like the ashes within a "child" icon, is proof of an unbroken line of mimesis with the "parent" cartoon.

THE SPREAD OF THE CULT: LOCALIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION

As Lin Weipin argues, icons function not only to embody gods but to localize them, "anchoring" them as permanent protectors of a geographically defined community.[23] Thus the process of dividing the incense and investing new icons with a god's agency is critical to the process of the expansion of Chinese god-cults—both spreading cults over geographical space and maintaining ties between satellite and center temple communities through pilgrimage. Given that this is a major function of Chinese icons, the "pop culture icon" trope is almost inevitably associated in Taiwan with the process of globalization.

Anthropologists have noted a major transformation in Taiwanese folk religion over the course of the twentieth century:

> Today, religious associations see themselves as part of island-wide networks, and deity cultures have gained ground at the expense of local temple cults . . . What Lin Meirong has described as "belief circles" (*xinyangquan*), with no territorial limitation, are ascendant over the "worship circles" (*jisiquan*) of traditional Taiwan.[24]

Local temple cults still exist in many villages and urban neighborhoods in Taiwan. For example, for temple cults dedicated to the Earth God (Tu Di Gong) the worship circle of those who participate in collective rituals is geographically limited to the space marked out by annual rituals in which the icons are carried around the village or neighborhood. But for young, urban, middle-class Taiwanese like my informants, such practices have become nostalgic phenomena. The religious institutions that are thriving today often have territories that expand not only throughout the island but beyond. For example, the Mazu cult now includes huge pilgrimages between Taiwan and Fujian, mapping out a cross-strait territory that defies state borders, and the Buddhist Compassion Association (*Ciji Hui*) has established branches around the world.[25]

As with the Mazu cult, pilgrimage has become part of how media characters' "belief circles" are reterritorialized into "worship circles," defined not by the permanent residential space of fans but by their physical movement through the world. Leng Bin's second book on her Snoopy toy collection is the record of a trip she took to a number of international "origin sites" of the character, including Charles Schulz's birthplace in Saint Paul, Minnesota, the Camp Snoopy theme park in California, and the giant Snoopy Town store in

Osaka.[26] The book includes photographs of Leng Bin's own Snoopy toys at several of these sites. Although Leng Bin does not explicitly use the pilgrimage trope, the similarities between her trip and Mazu worshippers' carrying icons of the deity from various temples in Taiwan to "mother" temples in Fujian is striking.

Like deities, media characters are characterized by fans in terms of their territorial range; the Pili heroes are "Taiwanese popular culture icons" whose movements into the global market are celebrated. Snoopy and Doraemon are described, in contrast, as "global characters."

As several scholars (e.g., Faure, Sangren) have noted, the multiplication of images of Chinese deities does not in itself diminish their aura. To the contrary, more images are proof of the strength of the god's *ling*. Likewise, despite the fact that hard-to-find toys are indeed more valuable for Taiwanese collectors, the proliferation of mass-market character toys does not diminish the aura of the "original" media character. Rather, the multiplication and geographical reach of character toys is seen as proof of the charisma of the "original" character.

SIMULACRA AND LOSS OF AURA IN TAIWAN

If the proliferation of simulacra is not a threat to the aura, Taiwanese people nevertheless feel the loss of *ling* as an effect of modernity and as the loss of a certain kind of "reality." *Ling*, as I have noted, is the common power among gods, ghosts, and ancestors. The character also refers to the dead and to funerary ritual. Humans are generally not said to have *ling* during life (unless they are possessed by, or otherwise in contact with, a god, ghost, or ancestor). The association of *ling* with death may also be seen in the animal sacrifice within the *ru shen* ritual. Thus, we might say that *ling* is the power of the dead to influence the world of the living. When character toys take over the agency-embodying and community-grounding functions of icons, they diminish the weight of history, lineage, and the racial conception of Chinese identity. Media characters are symbols of secularization not so much due to their commodity status as to their fictionality, their detachment from biological descent. What is lost is not the possibility of transcending the human but rather of forsaking human biology for human imagination.[27]

Despite differences in religious bases for understanding capitalist consumer culture, the theories of Benjamin, Baudrillard, and Jameson are extremely popular in Taiwan. The concept of hyperreality resonates strongly

with the experiences of many scholars and students here. Taiwanese scholars and students most often apply these theories to American cultural products rather than to Japanese or Taiwanese ones. When postmodern theories of the loss of the real are applied to East Asian media characters, however, the ambivalent implications of the "pop culture icon" trope for Taiwan's e-generation come into focus.

Taiwanese artist Hong Donglu's CG images show glossy figurines of super-girl characters from video games and manga (e.g., *Sailor Moon*) floating in front of Renaissance Christian paintings or iconic Chinese national images such as the Great Wall. Citing Baudrillard, Qiu Yaxuan gives a "queer shojo" (*ku'er shaonü*) reading of Hong's work. She writes:

> If the figures in the foreground are fake, the national and religious images in the background cannot hide their own falsehood either. The world we are facing is like a thin, fragile eggshell, we can only embody the myth of the new generation and walk freely through it. The GK [garage kit—a kind of PVC figurine that must be assembled from parts] models break through the background, facing the audience in righteous and brilliant poses. For the audience, who have shared both their loneliness and tenderness with them, it is like facing a micro-archaeology of game–manga–anime genealogy and the frequent changes of the real world outside—only the generic characters of the world of manga and anime are real. . . . Together these immature girls shoulder the power and the duty to change the world. Perhaps they also conceal the marginal cultural values of the new generation's youth culture, desiring nevertheless to participate in the real world. The revolution of the individual can be completed in the audiovisual world, but the ideal of self-realization is finally lost within a constructed fantasy.[28]

Steven Sangren has argued, following Durkheim and Marx, that *ling* is an "alienated representation" of the self-productive capacity of both individual and collective subjects.[29] The trope of the "pop culture icon" disrupts this alienation, throwing the responsibility for both self-making and world-making back to the human beings. It is not surprising, then, that Sailor Moon might present Taiwanese youth with the same ambivalent sense of terror and exhilaration that Walter Benjamin found in the technologies of mechanical reproduction. One particularity of Taiwanese readings of the trope, however, is the emphasis on the exchange of the racial-historical grounding of identity for the possibility of stepping "out into the world"—a promise not just for individual girls and for youth culture but for Taiwan itself.

Notes

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1. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation,* trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 169.

2. Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: an Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 96–97.

3. Yang Mao-lin, *Canonization of the Gods—the Pure Land of Maha,* gallery catalog (Taipei: Lin and Keng Gallery, 2006), 43.

4. Anne Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 12–13.

5. I do not see Taiwanese folk religion, or the pop culture icon trope, as unique or unchanging. Scholarly and popular discourse on folk religion in contemporary Taiwan has been strongly influenced by the ideology of "indigenization" and intertwined with a variety of contradictory identity projects. See Randall Nadeau and Chang Hsun, "Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors: Religious Studies and the Question of 'Taiwanese Identity,'" in *Religion in Modern Taiwan,* ed. Philip Clart and Charles B. Jones (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003), and Mayfair Meihui Yang, "Goddess across the Taiwan Strait: Matrifocal Ritual Space, Nation-State, and Satellite Television Footprints," *Public Culture* 16, no. 2 (2004): 209–38. I am most interested in the points of intersection between these discourses and local discourses about consumer culture. Many of the practices and concepts I discuss here may resonate with other areas of the world, particularly China and Japan, whose religious histories have long been entwined with Taiwan's. My focus here, however, is on how globalized media images are cathected to "Taiwanese culture" through specific, local inflections of the toy-as-icon trope. I should also note that Taiwanese toy collectors are by no means a homogenous group with a unified set of ideas about toys and icons. People of both sexes and all ages collect character toys in Taiwan, although the majority are high school and college students, and young professionals. In my fieldwork I came across a wide variety of attitudes towards character toys. The pop culture icon trope, however, is most explicit and elaborated in discourse of and about a subculture of media fans who are primarily young (teens to early thirties), urban, and strongly coded as feminine, although men participate.

6. Among the toy collectors I questioned on the subject, approximately 7 percent identified themselves as Christian, 20 percent defined themselves as Buddhist, and another 20 percent identified themselves as having "no religion." The remaining half indicated that they participated in some form of folk religious worship, mostly limited to home altar worship (of ancestors and gods) and to annual festivals such as Tomb Sweeping Day. Many of these prefaced their answer with "No religion, but . . ."

7. There is a roughly equivalent term in Hakka, *ning-shen* (I thank Zhang Zhengwei for this information), but no term with the same semantic range in Mandarin.

8. For terms that translate easily between dialects, I put the Mandarin first with the Holo after the slash.

9. According to master carver Xu Bingyuan, Taiwanese puppeteers from the Qing Dynasty to the 1930s usually bought their puppets from carvers in Fujian. However, as the Sino-Japanese war began, and direct relations between Taiwan and the mainland were cut off, puppeteers began asking local icon carvers to make puppets based on the Fujianese models (interview with author, June 2006).

10. Prasenjit Duara, "Superscribing Symbols: The Myth of Guandi, Chinese God of War," *Journal of Asian Studies* 47, no. 2 (1988): 780.

11. The classic ethnography of American active media-fan culture is Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992). For Japan, see Sharon Kinsella, "Japanese Subculture in the 1990s: Otaku and the Amateur Manga Movement," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 24, no. 2 (1998): 289–316.

12. Lin Wei-pin, "Taiwan Han Ren de Shenxiang: Tan Shen Ruhe Juxiang" (Icons of the Taiwanese Han people: A discussion of how gods are objectified) *Taiwan Journal of Anthropology* 1, no. 2 (2002): 115–47.

13. These descriptions are summarized from Liu Wensan, *Taiwan Shenxiang Yishu* (The art of Taiwanese icons) (Taipei: Yishu Jia Chubanshe, 1981) and Lin, "Taiwan Han Ren de Shenxiang."

14. Liu, *Taiwan Shenxiang Yishu,* 10.

15. David Jordan, *Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors: Folk Religion in a Taiwanese Village* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972).

16. Daniel C. S. Chen, "The Notion of the Soul in Chinese Folk Religion and Christian Witness," *Asia Journal of Theology* (Singapore) 11, no. 1 (1997): 11. There is much debate among specialists in Chinese religion about the nature and number of the human soul. The theories that there are three, ten, or twelve distinct kinds of "soul" are summarized in Chen's article. I am simplifying here in order to focus on those aspects of the concept of *ling-hun* that are most familiar and relevant for my informants, who are laypeople and not specialists.

17. Although there is no term in Chinese that can translate *darsan,* the term is used to analyze Buddhist and Taiwanese folk religious icon worship in Bernard Faure, "The Buddhist Icon and the Modern Gaze," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 3 (1998): 768–813, and Lin, "Taiwan Han Ren de Shenxiang."

18. Teri Silvio, "Remediation and Local Globalizations: How Taiwan's 'Digital Video Knights-errant Puppetry' Writes the History of the New Media in Chinese," *Cultural Anthropology* 22, no. 2 (2007): 285–313.

19. Faure, "The Buddhist Icon," 801.

20. P. Steven Sangren, "Dialectics of Alienation: Individuals and Collectivities in Chinese Religion," *Man* 26, no. 1 (1991): 67–86; Yang, "Goddess across the Taiwan Strait."

21. Xie Yuqi, *Duo-la-A-meng Shoucang Da Ji He* (Doraemon collector's set) (Taipei: Guo Bao, 2002): 46, italics added.

22. Ibid., 48.

23. Lin, "*Taiwan Han Ren de Shenxiang.*"

24. Nadeau and Chang, "Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors," 293.

25. See Yang, "Goddess across the Taiwan Strait."

26. Leng Bin, *Ai Shang Shinupi: Women de Shinupi Shoucang 2* (In love with Snoopy: Our Snoopy collection 2 [Snoopy in our memories 2]) (Taipei: Guo Bao, 2003).

27. The literal worship of fictional characters is by no means a new phenomenon in Chinese folk religion. Sun Wukong and Zhu Bajie (the Monkey King and Pigsy), characters from the Ming Dynasty novel *Journey to the West,* have long been worshipped in Taiwan. This practice is seen as superstition by religious specialists and is associated with the lower classes, women, and marginal social groups (in Taiwan, Zhu Bajie is worshipped by prostitutes). To a certain extent, then, the ambivalence of the pop culture icon trope in contemporary Taiwan replicates a historical ambivalence around popular culture and religion. The "worship" of commercialized mass media characters represents a threat to the authority of patriarchal lineage and official narrative. It is thus not surprising that it is young women, who are marginalized by these lineages and narratives, who are most active within media fandoms.

28. Qiu Yaxuan, "Zai bentao yuan qu de tongnian yu shanshan lai chi de chengzhang zhijian, qing siyu wo xiang shijie geming de liliang: tan Hong Donglu jiu jiu nian wanju xilie" (Between swiflty fleeing childhood and slowly approaching maturity, please give me the strength to move toward world revolution: on Hong Donglu's 1999 toy series), *United Daily News Supplement,* "Literary Café," December 2001. http://web.cca.gov.tw/coffee/author/skyyoung/33.html (accessed September 1, 2006).

29. Sangren, "Dialectics of Alienation."

STEVEN T. BROWN

Machinic Desires: Hans Bellmer's Dolls and the Technological Uncanny in *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*

> *There are no human beings in* Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence. *The characters are all human-shaped dolls.*
>
> —Oshii Mamoru

One of the most distinctive aspects of *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence,* Oshii Mamoru's 2004 sequel to the highly acclaimed feature-length animation *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), is the film's obsession with the uncanniness of *ningyō* (literally, "human-shaped figures") in the form of dolls, puppets, automata, androids, and cyborgs. In interviews, Oshii has acknowledged the importance of the concept of the uncanny (*unheimlich* in German; *bukimina* in Japanese) and its relation to *ningyō* for an understanding of *Ghost in the Shell 2*.[1] This concern is one that the sequel shares with the first movie, but *Ghost in the Shell 2* goes well beyond the earlier film in the scope of its engagement. Of particular interest is *Ghost in the Shell 2*'s repeated references to the erotic grotesque dolls constructed and photographed by German Surrealist Hans Bellmer (1902–1975). In this essay, I explore *Ghost in the Shell 2*'s intermedial play with various *ningyō* and how such engagements enter into the film's complex evocations of the uncanny at the limits of the human.

Any study of the uncanny must acknowledge at the outset how much it owes to the pioneering efforts of not only Sigmund Freud but also Ernst Jentsch,[2] the earliest writers to analyze the variety of complex phenomena associated with the uncanny and attempt to account for it in psychological and/or psychoanalytic terms. In addition, an enormous amount of critical attention has been given to Freud's essay on "The 'Uncanny'" (1919) by contemporary philosophers, literary theorists, and cultural critics such as Jacques Derrida, Hélène Cixous, Sander Gilman, Neil Hertz, Samuel Weber, and Nicholas Royle.[3] In most cases, such post-Freudian readers of the uncanny have focused their analysis on deconstructing Freud's reading of E. T. A. Hoffmann's "The Sandman" (1816).[4] In what follows, I am more concerned with discussing the uncanny as a literary and artistic motif with philosophical implications than I am in the explanatory power of Freudian discourse to account for the psychosexual etiology of the uncanny. In other words, I am less interested in rereading Freud's (mis)reading of "The Sandman," or in critiquing psychoanalytic metanarratives such as the "castration complex" or "death drive," than I am in unpacking the function of the trope of the uncanny in *Ghost in the Shell 2*. Indeed, I argue that engagements with the uncanny appearing in *Ghost in the Shell 2* should be regarded not so much as Freudian gestures on the part of Oshii as they are byproducts of Oshii's remediation[5] of the dolls of Hans Bellmer, which were explicitly designed to evoke the uncanny on many levels: more specifically, in terms of the repetition of déjà vu, the blurring of boundaries between life and death, animate and inanimate, and the doppelgänger. What binds together all of these instances of the uncanny is that in each case, the uncanny evokes a sense of unfamiliarity at the heart of the familiar, a feeling of unhomeliness in the home, an estrangement of the everyday. The defamiliarizations produced by the uncanny in *Ghost in the Shell 2* work to destabilize our assumptions about what it means to be human in a posthuman world and how we might relate to all the *ningyō* with whom we increasingly share the world.

"ONCE THEIR STRINGS ARE CUT, THEY EASILY CRUMBLE"

In his essay "From Wooden Cyborgs to Celluloid Souls: Mechanical Bodies in Anime and Japanese Puppet Theater," Christopher Bolton points out the strong analogy in the first *Ghost in the Shell* movie between cyborgs and traditional Japanese puppet performance (*ningyō jōruri*) with respect to "the

VISUALLY, THE PUPPET MOTIF APPEARS REPEATEDLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH SCENES IN WHICH ONE CHARACTER LITERALLY OR METAPHORICALLY "PULLS THE STRINGS" OF ANOTHER VIA CYBERBRAIN HACKING AND MANIPULATION.

divide between body and voice" that is "foregrounded by the ventriloquistic medium of animation."[6] There is no question that puppet-like characters and the division of body and voice are also important to the world of *Ghost in the Shell 2*. During the course of their investigations into a series of gruesome crimes committed by female androids called "gynoids"[7]—"hyper-realistic female robot[s] created specifically for sexual companionship"[8] who have murdered their owners after apparent malfunctions and then self-destructed—Batou and his new partner Togusa encounter numerous figures who are likened to puppets and confronted with their lack of control over their own actions and identity. This concern with puppets is announced to us in the soundtrack that plays as the opening credits roll in a choral melody composed by Kawai Kenji (with three variations repeated during the course of the film), entitled "Song of Puppets" (*Kugutsu uta*), which tells of a legendary Japanese creature called a "*nue*," with a monkey's head, raccoon dog's body, tiger's legs, and snake's tail, who sings in grief about the inanimate spirits of flowers, which lament "their being in this world of life, / Their dreams having faded away," awaiting the dawn of a new world in which the "gods will descend."[9] The *nue* is a chimera, able to turn itself into a black cloud, that brings misfortune and malady to those it visits, such as in the famous episode from the *Tale of the Heike,* where it is said to have made Emperor Konoe (r. 1141–1155) sick before being vanquished by Minamoto no Yorimasa (1106–1180). In the context of *Ghost in the Shell 2,* as the *nue*'s "Song of Puppets" is played over the opening credits, we witness the manufacture and assembly of a gynoid. Insofar as the ontological status of puppets (and their close cousins: dolls, automata, robots, cyborgs) and their relation to humans haunts the entire film, the elegiac "Song of Puppets" seems to announce not only the disappearance of completely organic human beings, whose "dreams having faded away" grieve and fall like the flowers mentioned in the song, but perhaps also the corruption of innocence that Oshii associates with the anthropomorphization of dolls and robots. But even as it nostalgically mourns the loss of beauty and innocence, the *nue* also announces the dawn of a new world. What that new world entails is the subject of *Ghost in the Shell 2*.

Visually, the puppet motif appears repeatedly in conjunction with scenes in which one character literally or metaphorically "pulls the strings" of another via cyberbrain hacking and manipulation. In the world of *Ghost in the*

Shell 2, cyberbrain hacking is associated with "the implantation of virtual experiences, including false memories, in order to steal information or control the victim."[10] In the futuristic setting of the story, which takes place in the year 2032 in unnamed multiethnic Asian cities (modeled after Hong Kong, Taipei, Manhattan, and Milan), Batou and most of his colleagues in Section 9 have cyberbrain implants, which are electronic components that facilitate direct access to massive information networks and memory storage in cyberspace, as well as other functions such as silent communication transmissions. Although clearly augmenting human capability, such implants also make one vulnerable to hackers, despite the existence of attack barriers that are supposed to help prevent infiltration but cannot guarantee it.

Scenes of puppet-like cyberbrain manipulation are foregrounded throughout *Ghost in the Shell 2.* For example, when Batou and Togusa pay a visit to the Kōjinkai yakuza gang, a local crime syndicate suspected in the murder of Jack Volkerson (a shipping inspector for the company that manufactures the gynoids), Batou defeats his opponents in the gun battle that ensues by hacking into their cyberbrains and infiltrating their technologically augmented vision centers so that they shoot at a holograph of Batou rather than at Batou himself. In the process, Batou also subdues a yakuza cyborg outfitted with an illegal Chinese prosthetic limb known as "the claw" and manipulates him like a marionette. In the convenience store scene that follows, which is a spectacular blend of three-dimensional computer-generated backgrounds and two-dimensional cel-style characters melded together into a hybrid form that astonishes with the sheer complexity of visual detail,[11] it is Batou himself who becomes the object of "ghost-hacking" and is manipulated like a puppet, probably by the professional hacker Kim at the request of Locus Solus (literally, "solitary place"), the company that manufactures the gynoids. In order to protect Batou from himself, as well as other patrons in the store, Ishikawa zaps Batou's cyberbrain implants. Batou later does the same to Togusa during a visit to Kim's mansion when Togusa is brain-hacked by Kim and subjected to a series of hallucinations, including scenes in which both he himself and Batou have turned into automata. Although Togusa is the least cybernetic member of the Section 9 team, he is nonetheless vulnerable to ghost-hacking due to his cyberbrain implants.

The uncanny blurring of boundaries between the animate and the inanimate, the living and the dead, is clearly exemplified by puppet-like characters, but the uncanny is also evoked in scenes involving cyberbrain hacking and e-brain communication. In recent years, there has been quite a bit of debate in the United States about the constitutionality (or lack thereof) of warrantless

wiretapping performed by the National Security Agency for purposes of domestic spying on suspected terrorist subjects. What *Ghost in the Shell 2* offers is a meditation on ontological wiretapping or electronic telepathy. If warrantless wiretapping violates free speech and privacy rights, ontological wiretapping (or electronic telepathy) undercuts the very existence of the stable subject to which such rights supposedly accrue.[12] What makes such instances of electronic telepathy profoundly uncanny is that, as Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle have suggested, they involve "the thought that your thoughts are perhaps not your own, however private or concealed you might have assumed them to be."[13]

Of course, this also raises serious questions about the status and authenticity of memory. If one's memories are not entirely one's own, if virtual memories are as vivid and realistic as actual memories, then how does one know whether one's memories are real or simply fake memories that have been implanted like those of the replicants in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982)? In the first *Ghost in the Shell,* Batou expresses a thoroughgoing skepticism about the possibility of distinguishing the real from the virtual: "Virtual experiences, dreams. . . . All data that exists is both reality and fantasy," says Batou to Kusanagi. And he articulates similar views in *Ghost in the Shell 2,* where he affirms that "there is no way to distinguish reminiscence from true memory" and asks Togusa: "Do your wife and daughter, waiting for you at home, really exist? . . . Your family exists only in your mind." In so doing, Batou draws an implicit comparison between Togusa and a ghost-hacked trash collector who appeared in the first *Ghost in the Shell,* whose implanted memories led him to believe that he was living with his wife and daughter, when, in fact, he was living alone.[14] And on this matter at least, Batou is in agreement with the philosophically inclined hacker Kim in *Ghost in the Shell 2,* who explicitly questions how one can distinguish between physical reality and "an extension of false illusions generated by virtual signals." "Humans," argues Kim, "are nothing but the thread from which the dream of life is woven."

With memory and subjectivity destabilized in this way, it is no wonder that characters in the world of *Ghost in the Shell* are frequently subjected to acts of ventriloquism, in which one is used as the mouthpiece for another. This ventriloquism is perhaps most pronounced in *Ghost in the Shell 2* in terms of the unbridled intertexuality of its screenplay. The dialogue of *Ghost in the Shell 2* is replete with layer upon layer of literary, religious, philosophical, and scientific citations, ranging from the Buddha to Confucius, from the Bible to Milton, from Zeami to Gogol, from Julien Offray de La Mettrie to Richard Dawkins.

Among the many quotations appearing in the film is one that is repeated time and time again. After the spectacular festival scene, as Batou interrogates an informant in an effort to determine the whereabouts of Kim, Togusa spots a stone plaque on the wall of a mausoleum in ruins, on which is inscribed the following poem: "Life and death come and go like marionettes dancing on a table. Once their strings are cut, they easily crumble (*Seishi no kyorai suru wa hōtō no kairai tari issen tayuru toki raku raku rai rai*)."[15] Oshii underscores the importance of language in his animated cinema not only by the tissue of quotations he interweaves throughout but also by visually foregrounding specific quotations such as this as texts on the screen. The same poem appears again as Kim's "dying message"[16] in the form of a hologram (see Figure 1). Later, it shows up yet again painted on a wall inside the offshore factory ship belonging to Locus Solus. Although *Ghost in the Shell 2* is replete with quotations, this is the only one that is repeated multiple times and linked either directly or indirectly to Locus Solus, Inc., and its manufacture of gynoids. Clearly, it is significant to the animated world that Oshii has constructed. So how are we to interpret it?

First, it should be pointed out that this quotation is from a poem included in a treatise by the Muromachi-period *noh* playwright and actor Zeami (c.1363–c.1443) entitled "Mirror of the Flower" (1424, *Kakyō*).[17] Taking into consideration the Buddhist connotations and genealogy of the poem, a more



FIGURE 1. An image of the poem that constitutes Kim's calling card and eventually his dying message. *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*.

literal translation might be: "Cycles of birth and death come and go, a puppet dances on the stage. When one string is cut, it collapses and crumbles." In the context of *noh* drama, Zeami uses this poem to advise the actor that he must "make his mind [function] like [these] strings, and without its being perceived by anyone."[18] In other words, when playing a particular role, the *noh* actor must learn to create the illusion that a character has come to life on the *noh* stage, just like a marionette manipulated by a puppeteer. The performance of *noh* relies upon forms of artifice not unlike the strings of a puppet. In the context of *Ghost in the Shell 2,* this quotation from Zeami's "Mirror of the Flower" treatise underscores the function of citationality throughout the film, as well as the performative aspect of animation itself.

At the formal level, the technique of interspersing quotations with dialogue is one that Oshii openly borrows from French New Wave director Jean-Luc Godard, who has made great use of such citationality in his films. Godard is well known for rejecting the continuity editing of classical Hollywood cinema and offering instead "a discontinuous and fragmentary narrative style that breaks up time and space, thereby forming a collage of letters, words, images, sounds, music, voices, paintings, quotations, and references to art and cinema."[19] Godard's employment of quotation, in particular, adds a distinctive dimension to his films that foregrounds the status of language in cinema, with "words and images intermingl[ing] constantly,"[20] "infusing the image with language,"[21] thereby creating a sort of "cinematic essay"[22] that constantly reminds us that we are viewing a film that is the product of the director's arbitrary choices.

However, in addition to being an obvious homage to Godard,[23] I would argue that Oshii's use of citationality in *Ghost in the Shell 2* also serves a larger philosophical purpose in relation to the ventriloquism of the puppet theater. Such citationality foregrounds not simply the ventriloquism of the director or screenplay writer but, more importantly, the ventriloquism of the flows of transnational cultural production, as has been discussed by numerous contemporary critical theorists. "Who speaks and acts?" asks philosopher Gilles Deleuze. "It is always a multiplicity, even within the person who speaks and acts."[24] In short, the subject becomes a tissue of citations. The numerous literary, poetic, philosophical, and scientific quotations in *Ghost in the Shell 2* underscore the extent to which its characters are akin to talking dolls—mouthpieces for the sociocultural machinery and transnational flows that intersect them. By foregrounding the transnational intertextuality of human subjectivity, Oshii underscores the extent to which we are thoroughly mediated animals, with no authentic thoughts or intentions but only

always already mediated thoughts and intentions. This citationality at the narrative level is paralleled at the visual level by a city that is overflowing with signs and advertisements, a thoroughly commodified urban space not unlike what one finds in the shopping districts of Tokyo, Osaka, or Hong Kong today. In his director's notes for the film, Oshii has commented on the ubiquity and importance of signs (especially those using Chinese characters) to the visual appearance of the urban landscapes in *Ghost in the Shell 2*.[25] This ubiquity of signs and unavoidability of mass media suggests that the city itself and almost everyone in it is subject to the mechanisms of commodification: "reality" dissolves into the virtuality of mass media.[26] In such a world, human beings start to resemble automata.

THE NUMEROUS LITERARY, POETIC, PHILOSOPHICAL, AND SCIENTIFIC QUOTATIONS IN *GHOST IN THE SHELL 2* UNDERSCORE THE EXTENT TO WHICH ITS CHARACTERS ARE AKIN TO TALKING DOLLS—MOUTHPIECES FOR THE SOCIOCULTURAL MACHINERY AND TRANSNATIONAL FLOWS THAT INTERSECT THEM.

FROM PUPPETS TO AUTOMATA

Although there is no question that a significant proportion of imagery in *Ghost in the Shell 2* resonates with the history of the puppet theater in Japan, the Japanese puppet theater does not go far enough to account for the appearance in the film of the plethora of doll-like figures of varying types, which extend far beyond that of traditional puppets. In particular, *Ghost in the Shell 2* also places great emphasis on two types of dolls that are quite distinct from the dolls of the Japanese puppet theater: mechanical dolls or automata, called *karakuri ningyō*, on the one hand, and the gynoids inspired by the dolls photographed by Hans Bellmer, on the other. Before turning to the gynoids and their relaton to the dolls of Bellmer, it is worth spending some time to unpack the role played by *karakuri ningyō* and their relation to the uncanny.

Japan has a long history of mechanical dolls, stretching back as far as the seventh century, when a doll that could indicate directions by means of an internal compass was presented to Empress Saimei (r. 655–661) in the year 658 by the Buddhist priest Chiyu.[27] Perhaps the most famous ancient Japanese mechanical doll is one that was developed during the ninth century by Prince Kaya (794–871) in response to a terrible drought that was choking the rice fields throughout the land. Prince Kaya, who, in addition to being the son of Emperor Kanmu (r. 781–806), was known as a skilled craftsman, devised

a mechanical doll to aid a local temple that was particularly affected by the drought, as recounted in the *Konjaku monogatari* (*Tales of Times Now Past*) from the twelfth century:

> He made a doll in the shape of a boy about four feet tall, holding a jug upraised in both hands. It was devised so that when it was filled with water the water would instantly pour down over the boy's face. Those who saw it brought ladles full of water so that they could fill the jug and watch the boy's face get wet. It was a great curiosity; the news spread, and soon all the capital was there, pouring water and loudly enjoying the fun. And all the while, naturally, the water was collecting in the fields. When the fields were fully inundated, the Prince took the doll and hid it. And when the water dried up, he took the doll out and set it up again. Just as before, people gathered to pour water, and the fields were inundated. In this manner the fields were kept safe from harm.[28]

WHAT SHARPLY DISTINGUISHES AUTOMATA SUCH AS *KARAKURI NINGYŌ* FROM THE DOLLS EMPLOYED IN THE JAPANESE PUPPET THEATER IS THE FORMER'S MECHANISM OF SELF-ANIMATION.

Like many other dolls that were later developed in medieval and early modern Japan, Prince Kaya's mechanical doll, which is known as the *mizukumi ningyō*, or "water-splashing doll," combined practical technology with entertainment. Another famous early example dates back to the Muromachi period (1392–1573), when Gosukōin (1372–1456), the father of Emperor Gohanazono (r. 1428–1464), describes in his diary an "elaborate mechanical doll tableaux reenacting famous battle scenes such as Yoshitsune's perilous cliff descent at the Battle of Ichinotani or the great hunt on Mount Fuji of the Soga Brothers."[29] Insofar as early Japanese mechanical dolls seem to have been inspired by even earlier Chinese examples, the etymology of the term *karakuri ningyō* is said to reflect this genealogy with the "*kara*" of *karakuri* phonetically connoting its Chinese origin or derivation.

The development of *karakuri ningyō* and their popularity peaked during the Edo period under the guidance of Takeda Ōmi (d. 1727), who incorporated and adapted clockwork technology, which had been recently imported from the West, and established the first mechanical puppet theater in the Dōtombori entertainment district of Osaka to compete with kabuki and *ningyō jōruri*, Japan's traditional puppet theater. Takeda specialized in *karakuri ningyō* based on technology involving wooden cogwheel and string

mechanisms, weight-driven mechanisms based on the displacement of sand, water, or mercury, and a new spring mechanism (*zenmai*), which he had developed, that was made out of whalebone. A wide range of *karakuri ningyō* were developed for Takeda's theater, including exhibits and performances that illustrated "the development of a fetus within the womb," "a neck-wrestling figure in which members of the audience were invited to match their strength against a life-sized mechanical doll, and calligraphy demonstrations based on the characters for 'plum,' 'cherry,' and 'pine,' in which a mechanical doll simultaneously executed these figures using a brush in both hands and his mouth."[30] In an effort to compete with kabuki and traditional puppet theater, the *karakuri ningyō* displays became even more complex and spectacular; however, this was not enough to prevent Takeda's *karakuri ningyō* theater from being eclipsed by the more popular kabuki and *ningyō jōruri*.

What sharply distinguishes automata such as *karakuri ningyō* from the dolls employed in the Japanese puppet theater is the former's mechanism of self-animation, their ability to move (or at least appear to move) by themselves. Although especially complex *karakuri* tableaux sometimes required the employment of operators, the *karakuri* performances were more mechanically driven than puppeteer controlled. In contrast, the dolls of traditional Japanese puppet theater were animated, but they were not automated. It is this automation—the very mechanism denoted by the word "*karakuri*"—that also distinguishes automata from puppets in *Ghost in the Shell 2*.

In the context of *Ghost in the Shell 2*, we see three types of *karakuri ningyō* in action: (1) enormous *dashi karakuri* (parade float mechanical dolls) created for processional floats used in festival parades, such as the giant automated elephant and other large-scale creatures appearing in the religious festival witnessed by Batou and Togusa on their way to investigating Locus Solus, which were traditionally intended not only to entertain the gods but also to serve as vessels into which the gods were thought to descend; (2) much smaller *zashiki karakuri* (parlor mechanical dolls) produced for home use and enjoyment, such as the "tea-serving" *karakuri ningyō* encountered in Kim's mansion; and (3) life-sized *butai karakuri* (stage mechanical dolls) designed for public performance, such as in Takeda Ōmi's theater. The figure of Kim, the professional hacker working for Locus Solus, as well as the automaton-like doubles of Togusa and Batou that are hallucinated by Togusa in Kim's neo-baroque mansion, are reminiscent of the sort of life-sized mechanical dolls used in *butai karakuri*. Although all three types of *karakuri ningyō* are relevant to the film's diegetic world, it is the last type that becomes the focus of Oshii's engagements with the uncanny in *Ghost in the Shell 2*.

THE UNCANNY MANSION

In Batou and Togusa's encounter with Kim in his surrealistic mansion, it is Kim's mechanical movements and gestures that make him more akin to a *karakuri ningyō* than to an android or cyborg. This is not to say that androids are not also capable of inhuman movements lacking smooth transitions, but in the case of Kim, he is represented in a way that repeatedly evokes the automaton-like appearance and cogwheel-driven mechanisms of other *karakuri ningyō*, such as the "tea-serving" (*chahakobi ningyō*) doll that also appears in Kim's mansion. In her study of Edo-period aesthetics and culture, Morishita Misako has suggested that it is the strangeness of *karakuri* movements that underscores their liminality:

> The *karakuri* puppet appears on the border where man and puppet make precarious contact. The figure of the [*karakuri*] puppet resembles the human figure. However, the moment that it starts to move, it reveals a decisive divergence from human movement; it makes rapid shifts difficult to capture with the naked eye, while simultaneously exposing its clumsiness. Each moment that its naive movement is inscribed, the expected modes of everyday performance and standard narrative patterns are dislocated. This disillusion is compensated for by our attraction to the movements and changes which that strange body, distinct from the human body, enacts to a greater or lesser degree than normal.[31]

It is at this intersection between attraction and repulsion, between simulation of the human and its estrangement, between the organic and the mechanical, that Togusa and Batou encounter the uncanny in all its multifariousness.

In the scenes that unfold at Kim's mansion, the uncanny is evoked in four ways. First, the uncanny enters Kim's mansion in the form of déjà vu, a sense that something has happened before, of having seen or experienced something before.[32] Each feedback loop in which Batou and Togusa find themselves caught, as they are compelled to repeat their tour of Kim's mansion again and again and again, produces the repetition associated with déjà vu. Such repetition has the effect of evoking uncertainty as to which realities are truly real and which are simulacra—uncertainty that is further heightened by the numerous trompe l'oeil paintings and holographs found throughout Kim's mansion.[33] It is only with the help of Batou's guardian angel, Kusanagi, who functions on more than one occasion as a sort of deus ex machina, that Batou is finally able to discern the illusoriness of the déjà vu experience.

The second way the uncanny becomes an issue is in terms of the blurring of boundaries between life and death evoked by the confusion as to whether Kim is dead or alive in his study.[34] Not only Batou's reflections on the myth of the Golem, as prompted by Kusanagi's holographic messages concerning the Hebrew words for "truth" (*aemaeth*) and "death" (*maeth*), but also Kim's own philosophical meditations are relevant here. "The doubt," asserts Kim in a guise that makes him look like an automaton version of Togusa, "is whether a creature that certainly appears to be alive, really is."

> Alternatively, the doubt that a lifeless object might actually live. That's why dolls haunt us. They are modeled on humans. They are, in fact, nothing but human. They make us face the terror of being reduced to simple mechanisms and matter. In other words, the fear that, fundamentally, all humans belong to the void.

Kim's mode of embodiment provokes such boundary confusion precisely insofar as he is an automaton, which brings us to the third form of the uncanny. Although Freud suggests that the uncanny may be summoned when "what is human is perceived as merely mechanical," such as in the case of epileptic fits, sleepwalking, and other trance-like states, the opposite is also true: automata are also potentially uncanny because "what is perceived as human is in fact mechanical."[35] In his dialogue with Batou, Kim (still wearing the guise of the automaton-like Togusa) offers an explanation for why this confusion between human and machine especially resonates with this era:

> In this age, the twin technologies of robotics and electronic neurology resurrected the eighteenth-century theory of man as machine. And now that computers have enabled externalized memory, humans have pursued self-mechanization aggressively, to expand the limits of their own functions. Determined to leave behind Darwinian natural selection, this human determination to beat evolutionary odds also reveals the very quest for perfection that gave it birth. The mirage of life equipped with perfect hardware engendered this nightmare.

After Kim offers this explanation, Batou's head turns toward Togusa with a clicking sound and opens up to reveal the sort of mechanisms that were first shown in the opening scene when a gynoid attempted to commit suicide in an alleyway after murdering her owner and two police officers. In Kim's mansion, after Togusa reacts with horror to the mechanization of Batou, the

feedback loop begins again with another scene of déjà vu. This brings us to the fourth form of the uncanny: the doppelgänger or double.

In the last instance of déjà vu, the structure of repetition enters into the scene of the uncanny in the form of the doppelgänger as Togusa has nightmarish visions that both he himself and Batou have automata doubles. Even more horrifying, after the appearance of the automaton double of Togusa, whose voice was that of Kim, in the next sequence the automaton double of Batou is substituted for Kim. After these multiple scenes of doubling, Togusa, hallucinating that he has been injured by an attack on Kim's mansion launched by the offshore factory ship of Locus Solus, witnesses his chest burst open to reveal that he himself is an automaton with a metal rib cage. As Michael Bennett and Nicholas Royle have argued, "The double is paradoxically both a promise of immortality (look, there's my double, I can be reproduced, I can live forever) and a harbinger of death (look, there I am, no longer me here, but there: I am about to die, or else I must be dead already)."[36] Although Kim sought perfection and immortality by transferring his consciousness to an automaton-like shell, the proliferation of doubles—Kim's double, Togusa's double, Batou's double—ends up undermining the very logic of identity.[37]

Each instance of the uncanny that unfolds at Kim's mansion (the repetition of déjà vu, the blurring of boundaries between life and death, animate and inanimate, and the doppelgänger) evokes a feeling of unhomeliness in the home, a defamiliarization of the everyday that destabilizes our assumptions about what it means to be human in a posthuman world and how we are to relate to all the *ningyō* (dolls, puppets, automata, and androids) that inhabit the world with us. It is to the last type of uncanny *ningyō*—referred to as "gynoids" in *Ghost in the Shell 2*—and their relationship to the work of Hans Bellmer that I now turn.

THE DOLLS OF HANS BELLMER

Oshii has made it very clear in his production notes to *Ghost in the Shell 2* and related interviews that his conception of the gynoid owes much to the work of Hans Bellmer, whose female dolls are referenced both visually and narratively throughout the film. According to the production notes, Oshii "has wanted to explore the theme of dolls" for thirty years, since he first "fell in love" as a student "with photographs of Hans Bellmer's ball-jointed doll."[38] Bellmer's influence can be seen throughout the film, from the design of the gynoids themselves to recreations of specific poses from Bellmer's art. In the

remainder of my essay, I explore the significance of Bellmer's work, review some of the relevant scenes from *Ghost in the Shell 2* in which Bellmer's work is clearly cited, and then discuss how Oshii's gynoids reiterate issues raised by Bellmer in relation to the question of machinic desire.

Hans Bellmer constructed his first life-sized female doll (which he dubbed "Die Puppe"—German for "doll" or "puppet") in 1933 out of papier-mâché and plaster covering a framework made of wood and metal. Bellmer stated his goals for the doll as follows: "I am going to construct an artificial girl with anatomical possibilities which are capable of re-creating the heights of passion, even of inventing new desires."[39] This doll was the subject of Bellmer's first book of photographs also entitled *The Doll* (*Die Puppe*), published privately in Germany in 1934, featuring ten black-and-white photographs of the doll situated in a variety of tableaux.[40] These photos, along with eight additional, were then published at the end of the year in the sixth issue of the famous Surrealist magazine *Minotaure* with the following header: "Doll. Hans Bellmer, variations on the assembling of an articulated female minor."[41]

Perhaps borne out of his frustration with the limited range of movement of the first doll, Bellmer created a second female doll (which he called "La Poupée"—French for "doll" or "puppet"), fabricated in 1935 out of glue and tissue paper painted to resemble flesh over a structure of "wooden ball joints and appendages pivoting around a central ball joint."[42] "Inspired by a pair of sixteenth-century articulated wooden dolls in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum," according to specialist Sue Taylor, Bellmer "produced a spherical belly for the new doll, around which could be arranged a number of parts in various combinations: four legs, four round stylized breasts, an upper torso, three pelvises, a pair of arms, and the recycled head and hand from the first doll."[43] This second doll was the subject of over one hundred photographs taken between 1935 and 1938, many of them hand-colored with monochromatic yellow, green, blue, or pink, or combinations of fluorescent colors.

The gender politics associated with Bellmer's dolls are complicated to say the least. Therese Lichtenstein and others have critiqued Bellmer's dolls for "linking his fantasies of adolescent girls as passive victim and powerful seductress with the themes of nostalgia and eroticism, and t[ying] his work to the French Surrealists' ambivalent desire for and revulsion at the female body."[44] Although stopping short of confirming Lichtenstein's conclusion about "revulsion at the female body," in his essay "Memories of the Doll Theme," which is a revised version of the foreword to his book *The Doll,* Bellmer does admit to the importance of masculine fantasy in the creation of the doll: "And didn't the doll, which lived solely through the thoughts projected into it, and which despite its

unlimited pliancy could be maddeningly stand-offish, didn't the very creation of its dollishness contain the desire and intensity sought in it by the imagination?"[45] And yet, such gender politics are also complicated by the fact that Bellmer views the dolls as exposing the foundations of such embodied fantasies and bringing to light the "anatomy of the physical unconscious" (*anatomie de l'inconscient physique*), as he referred to it.[46] To illustrate the mechanisms of interiority and their link to exteriority, Bellmer conceived of a doll with a rotating panorama mechanism installed in its stomach, an illustration of which was included in the publication of his book *The Doll*. By pressing the button located in the doll's left breast,[47] the panorama was set into motion and one could gaze upon a jumble of "small objects, different materials and colour pictures in bad taste," which were supposed to display "a girl's thoughts and dreams,"[48] but which more likely displayed what the artist projected onto them.

Bellmer's practice of reconfiguring the doll in grotesque ways, including doubling and multiplying sections of the doll to create what he acknowledged were "monstrous" additions—"a second pair of legs and arms, another torso with four breasts,"[49] and so forth—pushed the limits of what might be construed as human through a grammar of infinite combination and recombination. "I am talking about the possibilities of decomposing and then recomposing the body and its limbs 'against nature,'" wrote Bellmer in his unpublished notes from January of 1946.[50] What Bellmer was attempting to do with his doll experiments was to construct corporeal anagrams: "The body resembles a sentence," wrote Bellmer, "that seems to invite us to dismantle it into its component letters, so that its true meanings may be revealed ever anew through an endless stream of anagrams."[51]

Although Bellmer's dolls are not functioning automata, their quasi-mechanical internal workings, which are frequently exposed, seem designed to underscore their resemblance to automata.[52] As art historians Therese Lichtenstein and Sidra Stich have remarked, insofar as "the entire body could be assembled and reassembled like a machine,"[53] Bellmer's dolls seem to embody the Surrealist "nightmare of mechanization"[54] that haunted many artists in the wake of the First World War.[55] And like the automaton Olympia in E. T. A. Hoffman's short story "The Sandman," which had a significant impact on Bellmer, the dolls evoke the uncanny in their blurring of boundaries between the living and the dead, the animate and the inanimate. Whether in relation to the panorama mechanism contained in the belly of the first doll or the mechanical mobility of the ball joint utilized in the second doll, which Bellmer considered "a perfect cog around which endless bodily contortions could pivot and out of which he devised a vast operating system,"[56] the uncanny automaton

is central to an understanding of Bellmer's art. All of the concepts that he employs to describe his work—such as "anatomy of the image" (*anatomie de l'image*), "anatomy of the physical unconscious" (*anatomie de l'inconscient physique*), and "anatomy of love" (*anatomie de l'amour*)[57]—emphasize the machinic links between interiority and exteriority that are part and parcel of Bellmer's ongoing attempts to make visible the "desire apparatus" of our unconscious with its mechanisms, both real and virtual.[58]

WHAT BELLMER WAS ATTEMPTING TO DO WITH HIS DOLL EXPERIMENTS WAS TO CONSTRUCT CORPOREAL ANAGRAMS.

The crime "against nature" that Bellmer enthusiastically choreographed in the erotic scenographies of his doll photos was perpetrated not against actual human beings but rather against the fascistic conception of beauty and the perfect body proffered by National Socialist ideologues. After Hitler came to power on January 30, 1933, Bellmer was determined "to avoid any work that might in any way be of service to the state."[59] Bellmer writes that what he was doing was "a gesture of rejection of German fascism and the prospect of war: cessation of all socially useful activity."[60] As Michael Semff and Anthony Spira have suggested, Bellmer employed the doll "as a powerful tool for social critique, and a violent attack on stereotypes and the promotion of an idealised Aryan race."[61] By photographing his dolls in a way that underscored their grotesque and uncanny aspects, Bellmer offered acts of artistic resistance against the Nazi regime and its cult of the perfect body. Although Bellmer's art was not singled out for the Nazi-sponsored exhibition on "Degenerate Art" ("Entartete Kunst"), which opened in Munich in 1937 before traveling to Berlin in 1938,[62] nevertheless, Bellmer was well aware that his style of art and its subject matter were highly transgressive and that he was becoming "increasingly isolated"[63] in Germany in the current political atmosphere. Therefore, in March of 1938, Bellmer fled Berlin for Paris with a host of other German artists and intellectuals.

BELLMER/OSHII

Bellmer's influence can be seen throughout *Ghost in the Shell 2*. Every scene in which a ball-jointed gynoid appears may be construed as a reference to and remediation of Bellmer's doll photos. Among the strongest citations are images from the manufacturing scene in the opening credits, which shows us the assembly and doubling of the gynoid's ball-jointed body (see Figures 2 and 3).



FIGURE 2. The assembly of a ball-jointed gynoid. *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence.*



FIGURE 3. The doubling of the gynoid's body. *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence.*

When manipulating and deforming the integrity of the body, Bellmer had many tools at his disposal, including anatomical division, subtraction, addition, and multiplication (see Figure 4).[64] By utilizing two of those techniques, division and multiplication, the opening credits of *Ghost in the Shell 2* offer a poignant remediation of Bellmer's corporeal anagrams in the service of posthuman capitalism and its fetishistic obsession with what Walter Benjamin has described as "the sex appeal of the inorganic."[65]

Perhaps the most significant scene for understanding Oshii's remediation of Bellmer occurs at the film's outset when Batou comes face-to-face in a dark alley with a gynoid, who has just murdered her owner and two police

officers. The gynoid repeatedly asks for help before tearing open her chest with her own hands in an apparent suicide attempt and is then dispatched with multiple shotgun blasts by Batou. As Oshii confirms in his production notes,[66] this scene of self-mutilation is a direct citation of an illustration by Bellmer entitled *Rose ouverte la nuit* (Rose open at night) from 1934 (see Figure 5), produced contemporaneously with his doll photos. In addition to being a photographer, it is worth noting that Bellmer created numerous drawings, paintings, etchings, and sculptures "in an obsessive quest for a 'monstrous dictionary,'" as he called it, "dedicated to the ambivalence of the body."[67] Rather than pigeonholing Bellmer as a Surrealist photographer, it is probably more apt, as Michael Semff and Anthony Spira have suggested, to describe him as "an anatomist, an engineer, even a geographer or cartographer of the body."[68] Executed in pencil and white gouache on paper, *Rose ouverte la nuit* is considered by many Bellmer scholars to be "the most overtly transgressive" of all the monochrome drawings from this period, since the girl exposes her "internal organs and . . . ushers in the theme of 'undressing'—of interiority."[69] A number of Bellmer's doll photos reveal a similar interest in the disclosure of the doll's interior spaces and mechanisms. As I have already suggested in my discussion of his "anatomy of the physical unconscious," Bellmer was intensely interested in the reversibility of inside and outside, in turning the inside out and the outside in.[70]



FIGURE 4. Hans Bellmer, *La Poupée* (1938). Copyright 2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.

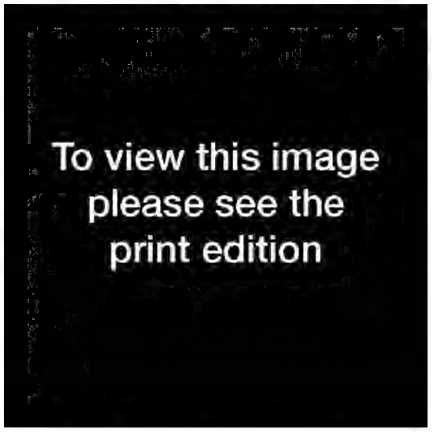


FIGURE 5. Closeup of Hans Bellmer, *Rose ouverte la nuit* (1934). Copyright 2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.

Standing in sharp contrast to the grotesque scene depicted in *Rose ouverte la nuit* is the delicate ornamental pattern appearing to the left of the girl, "undulating

like a lacy curtain."[71] As is the case in other works by Bellmer, the interlaced pattern in *Rose ouverte la nuit* visualizes pulsating lines of energy, tension, and desire as emitted from the girl's body. In comparing Oshii's gynoid with Bellmer's self-rending girl, it is noteworthy that the gynoid also wears a similarly impassive look on her face even as she tears open the skin on her torso and reveals the rib cage and machinic innards beneath (see Figure 6)—an expression that the gynoid also shares with the wax anatomical figures modeled after actual corpses that Oshii studied during preproduction at La Specola in Italy, which have sometimes been compared to Bellmer's work.[72]

The brick wall behind the gynoid, whose distorted lines are the result of the gynoid's impact against the wall during her combat with Batou, appear to undulate in the low-key lighting much like the lines of energy, tension, and desire emitted from the girl's body in *Rose ouverte la nuit*. However, whereas Bellmer's self-rending girl peers into the interior spaces of her abdomen, Oshii's gynoid looks directly at the camera at the precise moment of self-mutilation, appealing not only to Batou for help but also to the audience. Moreover, just as Bellmer's dolls, many of which reveal a similar interest in and disclosure of the body's interior spaces and mechanisms, function as an artistic protest against the Nazi regime's cult of youth and the perfect body, so too the scene of gynoid self-mutilation at the outset of *Ghost in the*



FIGURE 6. A gynoid attempting suicide. *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence.*

Shell 2 seems to function as an act of resistance against the ideal of beauty to which the kidnapped adolescent girls are being held captive. The gynoids engage in acts of destruction and self-mutilation in order to draw attention to the plight and exploitation of adolescent girls who have been kidnapped by the Kōjinkai gang and supplied to Locus Solus for the purpose of "ghost-dubbing"—a process by which the mind or spirit of a human is transferred to a gynoid in order to make it more "desirable."

The key to understanding this scene and others that follow is a detail that appears in the crime scene where Jack Volkerson, the shipping inspector for Locus Solus, was gruesomely murdered. During the course of investigation, Batou comes across a copy of Bellmer's book *The Doll* (see Figure 7), into which a holographic photo of an adolescent girl had been inserted. What we are shown in this scene is the front cover of a Japanese edition of *The Doll*, which was first published in 1995, featuring one of the hand-colored photos of Bellmer's ball-jointed doll.[73]

That the camera dwells on the cover of the book long enough to make out the title and even the author's name leaves no doubt that Bellmer's work is crucial to an understanding of *Ghost in the Shell 2*. But it is what is inside the book that provides the most important clue to the significance of Bellmer's work to the film as a whole. As Batou looks through the book, he comes upon



FIGURE 7. Batou holds a copy of Hans Bellmer's *The Doll*. *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*.

a holographic photo of an adolescent girl, which he studies at the crime scene and then again at his house. By situating the holographic image of the missing girl inside the book of *The Doll* by Bellmer, Oshii provides us with a visual metaphor that anticipates Batou's eventual discovery of the kidnapped girls being held captive by Locus Solus for the purpose of ghost-dubbing. In effect, just as Bellmer's book on artificial dolls contains the simulacrum of the captive girl inside of it, so too, the Locus Solus gynoids have been instilled with the simulacrum of the adolescent girls held captive. In this way, the reversibility of inside and outside that so deeply interested Bellmer is reenvisioned by Oshii as a critique of the anthropomorphization of gynoids and other robots.[74] Why is it necessary to make robots in our own image? Is it possible to coexist with forms of artificial intelligence without forcing them into the human mold? These are the sort of questions raised by *Ghost in the Shell 2* during the course of the anime's engagement with uncanny *ningyō*.

However, Oshii does not stop there. Just as important as the critique of the anthropomorphization of robots is a questioning of the human as such. As Coroner Haraway (a character named after Donna Haraway, author of the famed "Cyborg Manifesto"[75]) remarks, in a scene that features disassembled and suspended gynoids that strongly resemble Bellmer's doll photos, especially those showing dolls that are hanging in mid-air from a door frame or tree,

> The dolls that little girls mother are not surrogates for real babies. Little girls aren't so much imitating child rearing, as they are experiencing something deeply akin to child rearing. . . . Raising children is the simplest way to achieve the ancient dream of artificial life.

It is not only that dolls or gynoids are modeled after humans, it is that humans model themselves after the ideals embodied by artificial dolls such as gynoids. In other words, what we consider "human" is not simply a natural phenomenon but a complex sociocultural and philosophical construction. In response to Haraway's philosophizing, Togusa exclaims in protest: "Children aren't dolls!" However, Batou acknowledges Haraway's point by remarking that "Descartes didn't differentiate man from machine, animate from inanimate. He lost his beloved five-year-old daughter and then named a doll after her, Francine." Descartes doted on the doll named Francine as if it were his own daughter. Oshii not only blurs the boundaries between human and machine, animate and inanimate in order to evoke the uncanny, he also shows us the chiasmic intertwinement between the human and the machinic—the machinic *in* the human and the human *in* the machine.

In the penultimate shot of the film, Oshii brings to the fore the machinic nature of the human by showing Togusa's daughter happily embracing the blonde-and-blue-eyed doll that she has just received as a gift from her father. This simple image of a girl hugging her doll resonates with new meanings in the wake of all that has preceded, suggesting that, at the very least, it should be reinterpreted as constituting not merely an imitation of human rearing but more pointedly a circuit of relations—i.e., a machine—connecting humans and artificial figures made to look human in a relationship of coexistence that modifies each other in unforeseen ways. As Oshii has remarked in interviews, "to ask what the difference is between an adult raising a child and a girl playing with her doll" is "not an immoral question, nor does it indicate some kind of regression." Rather, it is quite simply "the only way we can understand the nature of human existence."[76]

In the end, *Ghost in the Shell 2* offers something more profound than simply another lesson in compassionate humanism, since it places into question the very foundation of humanism itself. When the cybernetically enhanced human subject looks into the mirror in *Ghost in the Shell 2,* what it sees is nothing more or less than what it has already projected as human. In other words, at the limits of the human, Batou discovers that human nature is itself synthetic—human "nature" is itself an artificial construct and desiring-machine.[77] As Togusa remarks to Batou in the elevator on the way to Coroner Haraway's lab, quoting Meiji-period satirist Saitō Ryokuu (1867–1904): "The mirror is not a tool of enlightenment, it is a tool of illusion [*kagami wa satori no gu ni arazu, mayoi no gu nari*]."[78] However, in the midst of demystifying such anthropocentric illusions and projections, just as it seems that, as philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche argues, "the human intellect cannot avoid seeing itself in its own perspectives, and *only* in these," since "we cannot look around our own corner,"[79] Oshii suggests a way outside of ourselves that is not conceived metaphysically in terms of transcendence but rather in terms of the "innocence" of becoming-animal.

ON THE INNOCENCE OF DOLLS, ANGELS, AND BECOMING-ANIMAL

Although the anime is known internationally as *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence,* in Japan it was originally released as simply *Inosensu,* the Japanese phoneticization of the English word "innocence." Oshii's stress on the word "innocence" begs the question as to whom or what the word applies in the

film. During a discussion held at the Japanese premiere of *Ghost in the Shell 2*, Oshii offered the following reflections on the problem of innocence in relation to humans and dolls:

> What would it mean for a human to "become more than human"? One answer would be to discard the actual human body, and embrace becoming a doll. People try to adjust their natural bodies, evolved for something very different, to the modern urban environment. Instead of following that trajectory, we're better off turning into dolls, into intended artifice.[80]

In a sense, this is what happens when the adolescent girls are ghost-hacked in order to breathe life into the gynoids by making them more animated and desirable, metaphorically transforming the girls into dolls themselves. However, Oshii goes to great lengths to undercut the innocence of the young women. Even as the self-destructing gynoids demystify the cultural constructedness (and artificiality) of the ideal of beauty in which the figure of the adolescent girl is quite literally trapped, *Ghost in the Shell 2* underscores the complicity of young women in the construction and perpetuation of such ideals. Although the girl released by Batou and Kusanagi proclaims loudly that she "didn't want to become a doll," Kusanagi criticizes the girl's self-pity, saying that "if the dolls could speak, no doubt they'd scream: 'I didn't want to become human.'" In other words, the girl–gynoid interface evokes the loss of innocence rather than its positive assertion. If innocence is to be found here, it is not in the adolescent girls but rather in the gynoids before they have been imprinted by the girls. As suggested by science fiction writer Yamada Masaki, who wrote the prequel novelization to *Ghost in the Shell 2*, entitled *Innocence: After the Long Goodbye*: "an empty doll is much more innocent than people attached to the illusion of 'human-ness.'"[81]

"WHAT WOULD IT MEAN FOR A HUMAN TO 'BECOME MORE THAN HUMAN'? ONE ANSWER WOULD BE TO DISCARD THE ACTUAL HUMAN BODY, AND EMBRACE BECOMING A DOLL."

On another level, innocence may be suggested by Batou's ethereal relationship with his "guardian angel," Kusanagi, who exists largely in cyberspace after merging with the Puppet Master at the end of the first movie. In his discussion with Oshii at *Ghost in the Shell 2*'s premiere, Yamada Masaki offered the following interpretation:

> The reason Batou goes into enemy territory isn't really because he wants to rescue someone, nor is it really because he wants to solve the case. He just

> wants to meet his angel, Motoko. It doesn't really matter whether their relationship is a conventional romance or not. You see, their love might seem cold to humans, but what is between them is no longer human, and now very innocent.[82]

However, what is all too often lost in discussions of the innocence of Batou's relationship with Kusanagi is the significance of Kusanagi's name, which is rich with cultural connotations in Japanese history and mythology. According to Japanese mythology, the Kusanagi Sword (or *Kusanagi no Tsurugi*) was one of the legendary imperial treasures once given as a gift to the warrior Yamato Takeru to help him defeat his enemies—a weapon comparable in importance to the sword Excalibur in the history of Britain. It was thought that any warrior who brandished the Kusanagi Sword could defeat an entire army. It is said that in one particular battle, when he was trapped in an expanse of grassland ignited by his enemy, Yamato Takeru employed the sword both to cut the grass and control the direction of the wind, thereby protecting himself and blowing the grass fire toward his enemy, who was soon vanquished. To commemorate his victory, Yamato Takeru renamed the sword "Kusanagi," which means "grasscutter."[83]

In the context of *Ghost in the Shell 2,* as soon as Batou has gained access to the production area for Hadaly-model gynoids, an army of gynoids is released to seize the intruder. Batou initially keeps the gynoids at bay but is soon outnumbered. Suddenly, Batou's guardian angel, Kusanagi, downloads herself into one of the gynoids in order to protect Batou and assist him in defeating the gynoid army. In this sense, however innocent Batou's relationship to Kusanagi may seem, by turning Kusanagi into a weapon for Batou's protection, her character is reduced to little more than a supplement to aid him in defeating the army of gynoids. Indeed, even Kusanagi remarks on the limitations placed on her agency and powers of expression when downloaded into the body of a gynoid: "To be precise, it's just a fragment of me downloaded via satellite. This gynoid's e-brain lacks capacity. It can only handle the combat robotics control system. This is the best I can do for facial and vocal expression." As soon as she has fulfilled her mission, Kusanagi disappears again into the ether of cyberspace, leaving the viewer to wonder if this representation of the vanishing woman with its erasure of the female body is really so innocent after all.[84]

However, there is one more example of innocence, and it is one that Oshii has raised repeatedly in interviews about *Ghost in the Shell 2.* In response to the question that was considered earlier—"What would it mean for a human to 'become more than human'?" —Oshii offers a second possible answer:

> Another option is to communicate with dogs. Once you discard anthrocentrism, you have to take animals into consideration. Dogs provide a much better contrast against robots or dolls than humans do. . . . Dogs became unique creatures by interacting and living with humans. . . . By communicating with dogs, I thought humans might realize something about themselves. So I wanted to contrast humans against dogs, rather than simply against artificial intelligence.[85]

Oshii is well known for inserting cameos of his beloved basset hound "Gabriel" in most of his anime and a few of his live-action films, but *Ghost in the Shell 2* provides the most extended homage to basset hounds thus far. In addition to modeling the animated basset hound after the likeness of the real Gabriel, Oshii recorded his dog's barks and other sounds for added authenticity. From Batou's affectionate relationship with his dog to the basset hound posters and imagery sprinkled throughout the film (including a mechanical basset hound in the likeness of Gabriel at Batou's house and images of a basset on the spinning globe inside Kim's mansion), the dog motif plays a significant role in *Ghost in the Shell 2*.[86] Indeed, the importance of dogs is signaled in the very first scene when we are shown a neon sign situated on top of a large skyscraper displaying the Chinese character for small dog or puppy. Likewise, in the last scene of the film, after we see Togusa hug his daughter and his daughter hug the new doll that he has just given to her as an *omiyage,* the camera cuts to a close-up of the doll's face, followed by a head-and-shoulders close-up shot of Batou hugging his dog with city skyscrapers looming in the distance. Batou's basset hound emits a low murmur and stares pensively at the girl and her new doll, while Batou looks directly at the camera through his opaque cyborg eyes. Insofar as the dog motif appears in both the first and last shots of the film, it effectively enframes the film as a whole, underscoring the importance of the dog to *Ghost in the Shell 2*. To understand why Oshii has "gone to the dogs," it helps to consider the concept of "becoming-animal" elaborated by philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*.[87]

Rather than reduce the animal to "a representative of the drives, or a representation of the parents," which is, according to Deleuze and Guattari, what psychoanalysis does every time it encounters the question of the becoming-animal in humans, *Ghost in the Shell 2* shows us a cybernetic human (Batou) who is becoming-animal by entering into composition with a dog, thereby forming a new assemblage with one another, an assemblage in which relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness, as well as zones of proximity and intensity, are shared. Batou's becoming-animal does not involve

imitation of his dog—he does not try to represent the dog as human; rather, he enters into composition with it, thereby releasing nonhuman possibilities into the human "outside the programmed body."[88] Becoming-animal is not simply the reproduction of an animal image, much less the metamorphosis into that animal, but rather a deterritorialization of the human and the animal, in which both the human and animal become something else—involving new intensities, affects, speeds, and modes of being—as a result of the new assemblage formed by their circuit of relations, such that it becomes "impossible to say where the boundary between the human and animal lies."[89]

At the very end of *Ghost in the Shell 2,* as Batou and his basset appear in the last shot in a mutual embrace, the becoming-animal of Batou approaches cyborg theorist Donna Haraway's reflections on "companion species" as an attempt to find "non-anthropomorphic ways" to conceive of agencies and actors and the coevolutionary networks that constitute them.[90] It is not simply, as Lisa Bode argues, that "the unconditional love and animal innocence of our pets is one of the few things that keeps us from becoming truly dehumanised while living and working in dehumanising systems."[91] Rather, it is that as we enter into coevolutionary networks with dogs, as we learn to coexist with nonhuman entities in the most intimate of spaces—our homes—we are altered by dogs as much as dogs are altered by us. In the end, Oshii suggests that our relations with dogs may be a possible way out of our anthropocentric obsession with uncanny *ningyō,* a way outside of ourselves. As Deleuze and Guattari put it: "There is no longer man or animal, since each deterritorializes the other, in a conjunction of flux, in a continuum of reversible intensities."[92]

Notes

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1. Interview with Oshii Mamoru, "Anime wa zure kara hajimaru: 2D to 3D no hazama de" (Anime Starts from a gap: At the interval between 2D and 3D), *Yuriika* 30, no. 4 (2004): 59. Also see Sharalyn Orbaugh, "Frankenstein and the Cyborg Metropolis: The Evolution of Body and City in Science Fiction Narratives," in *Cinema Anime: Critical Engagements with Japanese Animation,* ed. Steven T. Brown (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 98, 102–3, 109 n.43.

2. Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* ed. and trans. James Strachey et al. (London: Hogarth, 1955), 17:217–56; Ernst Jentsch, "On the Psychology of the Uncanny," *Angelaki* 2, no. 1 (1995): 7–16.

3. Jacques Derrida, "The Double Session," in *Dissemination,* trans. Barbara Johnson

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 220 n.32, 268–69 n.67; Hélène Cixous, "Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's '*Das Unheimliche*' ('The "Uncanny"')," *New Literary History* 7 (1976): 525–48; Sander Gilman, ed., *Reading Freud's Reading* (New York: New York University Press, 1994); Neil Hertz, "Freud and the Sandman," in *The End of the Line: Essays on Psychoanalysis and the Sublime* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 296–321; Samuel Weber, *The Legend of Freud* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000); Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

4. E. T. A. Hoffmann, "The Sandman," in *The Golden Pot and Other Tales,* trans. Ritchie Robertson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 85–118.

5. "Remediation" is defined by media theorists Jay David Bolter and Richard Gruisin as follows: "It is that which appropriates the techniques, forms, and social significance of other media and attempts to rival or refashion them in the name of the real." I would qualify this definition by revising the last part: acts of remediation are performed not only in the name of "the real" but may just as well be performed in the name of "literary or aesthetic value," "cultural or political authority," "beauty," as well as "pleasure" and "entertainment." Indeed, the functions of remediation are probably as diverse as the audiences of remediation. On remediation, see Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), 65.

6. Christopher Bolton, "From Wooden Cyborgs to Celluloid Souls: Mechanical Bodies in Anime and Japanese Puppet Theater," *positions* 10, no. 3 (Winter 2002): 748.

7. As Tatsumi Takayuki points out, the term "gynoid" was first coined by British science fiction novelist Gwyneth Jones in *Divine Endurance* (London; Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1984) and later appropriated by other authors and artists, from Richard Calder to Sorayama Hajime. See Tatsumi Takayuki, *Full Metal Apache: Transactions between Cyberpunk Japan and Avant-Pop America* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006), 93–102, 213 n.1–2.

8. From the marketing materials for *Inosensu,* dir. Oshii Mamoru (2004); translated as *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence,* subtitled DVD (Universal City, Calif.: DreamWorks Home Entertainment, 2004). The murders are committed by a "Hadaly-model" gynoid. The name "Hadaly" invokes not only the female android of the same name that appears in the nineteenth-century science fiction novel *L'Ève future* (*Future Eve,* 1886) by French symbolist writer Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam (1838–1889), who first coined the word "android" and whose work is quoted in the epigraph at the outset of *Ghost in the Shell 2,* but also the humanoid robot with the same name developed in 1995 at the Humanoid Robotics Institute at Waseda University in Tokyo to investigate human–robot interaction and communication, which had the capability to speak and listen in Japanese and make meaningful gestures with its arms in order to give directions. Incidentally, Hans Bellmer also cited *L'Ève future* as a minor influence on his work. For a discussion of *Ghost in the Shell 2* in relation to *L'Ève future,* see Sharalyn Orbaugh, "Frankenstein and the Cyborg Metropolis," 97, 100, as well as Orbaugh's chapter in this volume. On robotics research at Waseda University, see Humanoid Robotics Institute Web site, http://www.humanoid.rise.waseda.ac.jp/ booklet/ booklet2000.html (accessed October 15, 2006). On Bellmer and *L'Ève future,* see Sue Taylor, *Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000), 231, n.33.

9. Oshii Mamoru, *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* (Ani-Manga), 4 vols., trans. Yuji Oniki (San Francisco: Viz, 2005), 2:148–49.

10. See "Glossary of Terms," in Oshii, *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* (Ani-Manga), 3:2.

11. Whereas limited animation was first adopted as a way to cut corners on a tight budget, Oshii pushes the complexity of contemporary animation (and the animators whom he employs) to the limit in scenes such as this, which reportedly required two-to-three thousand background drawings.

12. See Bolton, "From Wooden Cyborgs to Celluloid Souls," 733–34.

13. Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism, and Theory,* 3rd ed. (Harlow, U.K.: Pearson Longman, 2004), 38. See also Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" 234; Royle, *The Uncanny,* 256–76.

14. The trash collector was a puppet used to ghost-hack government officials.

15. This poem also appears in the late-fourteenth-century Rinzai Zen text *Gettan oshō hōgo* (Priest Gettan's Buddhist sermons). According to *noh* scholars Omote Akira and Katō Shūichi, the medieval pronunciation would have been slightly different: "*Shōji korai hōtō no kwairai issen tayuru toki raku raku rai rai.*" See Omote Akira and Katō Shūichi, eds. *Zeami, Zenchiku,* in *Nihon shisō taikei,* vol. 24 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974), 100.

16. Oshii Mamoru, *"Inosensu" Methods: Oshii Mamoru enshutsu nōto* ("*Innocence* methods: Oshii Mamoru's direction notes) (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 2005), 12.

17. Oshii on the audio commentary to *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* DVD.

18. Mark Nearman, "*Kakyō*: Zeami's Fundamental Principles of Acting (Part Two)," *Monumenta Nipponica* 37, no. 4 (Winter 1982): 490.

19. Peder Grøngaard, "For Ever Godard: Two or Three Things I Know about European and American Cinema," *p.o.v.* 12 (December 2001), http://pov.imv.au.dk/Issue_12/section_1/artc5A.html (accessed September 10, 2006).

20. Jean-Luc Godard, *"A Woman Is a Woman"; "A Married Woman"; "Two or Three Things I Know about Her": Three Films* (London: Lorrimer, 1975), 153.

21. John Conomos, "Only the Cinema," *Senses of Cinema* 14 (June 2001), http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/14/godard_conomos.html (accessed October 14, 2006).

22. Grøngaard, "For Ever Godard."

23. In *The Cinema of Mamoru Oshii: Fantasy, Technology, and Politics,* Dani Cavallaro recognizes that Oshii's use of intertextuality is derived from Godard but does not explore the larger philosophical implications of such a technique in the context of the film's extended engagement with *ningyō.* See Dani Cavallaro, *The Cinema of Mamoru Oshii: Fantasy, Technology, and Politics* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2006), 202.

24. Gilles Deleuze, "Intellectuals and Power," in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault,* ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977), 206.

25. Oshii, *"Inosensu" Methods,* 4.

26. Scott Bukatman, *Terminal Identity: The Virtual Subject in Postmodern Science Fiction* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993), 66–67.

27. Alan Scott Pate, *Ningyō: The Art of the Japanese Doll* (Boston: Tuttle, 2005), 229. For this and other details concerning *karakuri ningyō,* I am indebted to Pate, 224–30; Morishita Misako, *Edo no biishiki* (Edo's aesthetic sense) (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 1988), 160–90; Nishimura Shigenaga and Takeda Ōmi, *Ōkarakuri ezukushi* (Illustrated collection of *Karakuri*) (Tokyo: Yoneyamado, 1933); and Tagaya Kanchusen, Kawaeda Toyonobu, Hosokawa Yorinao, and Kikuchi Toshiyoshi, *Karakuri kinmo kagamigusa* (Textbook on *Karakuri*) (Tokyo: Kowa Shuppan, 1976).

28. Marian Ury, trans., *Tales of Times Now Past* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), 142.

29. Recorded in *Kanmon gyōki* (Diary of things seen and heard), quoted in Pate, *Ningyō,* 224.

30. Pate, *Ningyō,* 224.

31. Morishita, *Edo no biishiki,* 187–88, quoted in Yamaguchi Masao, "*Karakuri*: The Ludic Relationship between Man and Machine in Tokugawa Japan," in *Japan at Play: The Ludic and the Logic of Power,* ed. Joy Hendry and Massimo Raveri (London: Routledge, 2002), 74.

32. The name of the gynoid manufacturing company, "Locus Solus," is a reference to the 1914 French novel of the same name by Raymond Roussel. Canterel, the protagonist of Roussel's *Locus Solus,* resembles the hacker Kim in *Ghost in the Shell 2* not only with respect to the surrealistic country estate he occupies, which contains all manner of strange sights (including reanimated corpses), but also insofar as he orchestrates numerous scenes of repetition, causing the dead to reenact the most important events of their lives again and again in a perpetual cycle of déjà vu. See Raymond Roussel, *Locus Solus,* trans. Rupert Copeland Cunningham (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970); and Mark Ford, *Raymond Roussel and the Republic of Dreams* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000), 121–50.

33. A number of the surrealistic scenes in Kim's mansion were inspired by the work of American photographers Jerry Uelsmann and Arthur Tress. According to the director's annotations to the storyboards for *Ghost in the Shell 2,* Oshii consulted the following collections by Uelsmann: *Uelsmann: Process and Perception* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1985), *Jerry Uelsmann: Photo Synthesis* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), and *Uelsmann/Yosemite* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996). On the photography of Arthur Tress, see Richard Lorenz, *Arthur Tress: Fantastic Voyage: Photographs 1956–2000* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2001).

34. Here it is worth noting that the character design for Kim was inspired by the work of artist Yotsuya Shimon (commonly known as Yotsuya Simon), particularly his life-sized, ball-jointed dolls (see especially a work entitled "Man" from 2000). Since Yotsuya's dolls frequently blur the boundary between the living and the dead, the human and the mechanical, it is easy to see why his work lent itself to Oshii's vision in *Ghost in the Shell 2.* Indeed, Oshii was so taken by Yotsuya's work and its resemblance to the dolls of Hans Bellmer, who is also one of Yotsuya's principal inspirations, that he collaborated with Yotsuya on an Oshii-supervised exhibition entitled "Dolls of Innocence," which was held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tokyo from February 7 through March 21, 2004. The exhibit included many disturbing works of doll-related art by artists including Yotsuya, Bellmer, Akiyama Mahoko, Igeta Hiroko, Amano Katan, and Miura Etsuko. On the "Dolls of Innocence," see http://www.simon-yotsuya.net/information/dolls-of-innocence.htm (accessed October 15, 2006).

35. Bennett and Royle, *An Introduction,* 36–37. Also see Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" 226–27. A similar uncanniness is evoked when the face of Coroner Haraway, who appears to be an organic human, opens up to reveal hidden mechanisms.

36. Ibid., 39.

37. See ibid.

38. During preproduction research, Oshii made a special trip, which is said to have had "a profound impact on his vision for *Ghost in the Shell 2*," to the International Center of Photography in New York to study a special exhibition of Bellmer's doll photos. See the production notes for *Ghost in the Shell 2* at http://www.gofishpictures.com/GITS2/main.html (accessed July 28, 2007). Also see Oshii Mamoru, *Inosensu sôsaku nôto: Ningyō, kenchiku, shintai no tabi+taidan* (*Innocence* production notes: The journey of dolls, architecture, bodies + interviews) (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 2004), 26–28.

39. Quoted in Peter Webb with Robert Short, *Hans Bellmer* (London: Quartet Books, 1985), 29.

40. For examples of the first doll, see Hans Bellmer, *The Doll,* trans. Malcolm Green (London: Atlas Press, 2005), 45–54; Michael Semff and Anthony Spira, eds., *Hans Bellmer* (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2006), 72–78; and Sue Taylor, "Hans Bellmer in the Art Institute of Chicago: The Wandering Libido and the Hysterical Body," http://www.artic.edu/reynolds/essays/taylor (accessed August 17, 2006).

41. Quoted in Agnès de la Beaumelle and Laure de Buzon-Vallet, "Chronology," in *Hans Bellmer,* ed. Michael Semff and Anthony Spira, 236.

42. From the curator's introduction to an exhibit of Hans Bellmer's photography held at the International Center of Photography, March 29–June 10, 2001, which is probably the exhibit of Bellmer's work to which Oshii refers in his production notes. See Therese Lichtenstein, "Behind Closed Doors: The Art of Hans Bellmer," http://museum.icp.org/museum/exhibitions/bellmer/intro1.html (accessed September 5, 2006).

43. Taylor, "Hans Bellmer in the Art Institute of Chicago." For examples of the second doll, see Bellmer, *The Doll,* 73–101; Semff and Spira, eds., *Hans Bellmer,* 88–101; and Taylor, "Hans Bellmer in the Art Institute of Chicago." A selection of Bellmer's photographs of both dolls is available online at http://www.angelfire.com/in2/belmer/ (accessed July 29, 2007).

44. Therese Lichtenstein, "Behind Closed Doors: The Art of Hans Bellmer."

45. Hans Bellmer, "Memories of the Doll Theme," in *The Doll,* trans. Malcolm Green, 40.

46. According to Bellmer and his cohorts, he "aimed from the very beginning at revealing the 'physical unconscious.'" See Malcolm Green, "Introduction," in Hans Bellmer, *The Doll,* trans. Malcolm Green, 16; Peter Webb, *The Erotic Arts* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1983), 366–70; and Webb and Short, *Hans Bellmer,* 38.

47. See Bellmer, "Memories of the Doll Theme," 41–42.

48. Quoted in de la Beaumelle and de Buzon-Vallet, "Chronology," 234.

49. Ibid., 237.

50. Quoted in Agnès de la Beaumelle, "Hans Bellmer: The Stakes at Play in Drawing *Les Jeux de la poupée*," in *Hans Bellmer,* ed. Michael Semff and Anthony Spira, 35.

51. Hans Bellmer, "A Brief Anatomy of the Physical Unconscious, or The Anatomy of the Image," in *The Doll,* trans. Malcolm Green, 133.

52. See Bellmer, *The Doll,* 41, 45–48.

53. Lichtenstein, "Behind Closed Doors."

54. Sidra Stich, *Anxious Visions: Surrealist Art* (Berkeley, Calif.: University Art Museum; New York: Abbeville Press, 1990), 51.

55. See de la Beaumelle, "Hans Bellmer," 33. Also compare Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 136.

56. De la Beaumelle, "Hans Bellmer," 34.

57. Wieland Schmied, "The Engineer of Eros," in *Hans Bellmer,* ed. Michael Semff and Anthony Spira, 22.

58. Ibid., 24; de la Beaumelle, "Hans Bellmer," 37.

59. Green, "Introduction," 15.

60. Quoted in de la Beaumelle and de Buzon-Vallet, "Chronology," 233.

61. Michael Semff and Anthony Spira, "Introduction," in *Hans Bellmer,* eds. Semff and Spira, 9. Also see Therese Lichtenstein, *Behind Closed Doors: The Art of Hans Bellmer* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 5–6, 16–17, 127–28, 137–38, 159–60.

62. Lichtenstein, *Behind Closed Doors,* 131–35.

63. De la Beaumelle and de Buzon-Vallet, "Chronology," 238.

64. See de la Beaumelle, "Hans Bellmer," 35.

65. Walter Benjamin, "Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century" (1935), in *The Arcades Project,* trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1999), 8. On cyberpunk's "desire *for* machines" and technofetishism, see Thomas Foster, *The Souls of Cyberfolk: Posthumanism as Vernacular Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 81–114.

66. Oshii, *"Inosensu" Methods,* 52.

67. Ibid., 10.

68. Ibid., 12.

69. De la Beaumelle and de Buzon-Vallet, "Chronology," 237.

70. Bellmer, "The Ball-Joint," in Hans Bellmer, *The Doll,* trans. Malcolm Green, 60–61.

71. Taylor, *Hans Bellmer,* 28.

72. For examples from the collection at La Specola that bear a striking resemblance to the self-rending girl in Bellmer's *Rose ouverte la nuit* and Oshii's suicidal gynoid in *Ghost in the Shell 2,* see Monika von Düring, Marta Poggesi, and Georges Didi-Huberman, *Encyclopaedia Anatomica: Museo La Specola Florence* (Cologne: Taschen, 2006), 72–79.

73. Although the text of the book has been changed to Korean, the cover is a reproduction of the Japanese edition of Hans Bellmer's *The Doll* that was published by Treville in 1995 and is cited in the credits to *Ghost in the Shell 2.* See Hans Bellmer, *The Doll* (Tokyo: Treville Co., Ltd., 1995).

74. In his press release for Cannes, Oshii opines: "This movie does not hold the view that the world revolves around the human race. Instead, it concludes that all forms of life—humans, animals, and robots—are equal. . . . What we need today is not some kind of anthropocentric humanism. Humanity has reached its limits."

75. Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s," in *The Haraway Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 7–45. Although some of the gynoids in *Ghost in the Shell 2,* particularly those without hair that are suspended in Coroner Haraway's lab, seem to bear more than a passing resemblance to the amorous androids made famous in Björk's acclaimed 1999 music video "All Is Full of Love" (dir. Chris Cunningham), Oshii has indicated that the gynoids were inspired by the work of Hans Bellmer and Yotsuya Simon. On Björk's "All Is Full of Love," see http://www.director-file.com/cunningham/bjork.html (accessed July 27, 2007).

76. Oshii Mamoru, "Afterword: Masaki Yamada and Mamoru Oshii on *Innocence,*" in

Yamada Masaki, *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence: After the Long Goodbye* (San Francisco: Viz Media, 2005), 193.

77. Compare Christine Boyer and Dani Cavallaro on the "mass-production of identity." See M. Christine Boyer, *CyberCities: Visual Perception in the Age of Electronic Communication* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 108; and Dani Cavallaro, *Cyberpunk and Cyberculture: Science Fiction and the Work of William Gibson* (London: Athlone Press, 2000), 108.

78. Saitō Ryokuu, *Ryokuu keigo* (Ryokuu's aphorisms) (Tokyo: Fuzanbō, 1991), 75 (translation mine). Compare Cavallaro in *The Cinema of Mamoru Oshii,* who notes, "Oshii has posited the image of the mirror as a symbol of self-absorption and, by extension, egoism and accordingly furnished Kim's mansion with a plethora of reflective surfaces, including marble and polished gold" (211).

79. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science,* trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), aph. 374.

80. Oshii, "Afterword," 190.

81. Yamada Masaki, "Afterword," 192.

82. Ibid., 193–94.

83. The sword was originally called "*Ame no murakumo no tsurugi,*" or "Sword of Billowing Clouds."

84. On the figure of the vanishing woman in relation to the emergence of new visual technologies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and anxieties about the female body, see Karen Beckman, *Vanishing Women: Magic, Film, and Feminism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003).

85. Oshii, "Afterword," 190–91.

86. In the scene of Batou feeding his basset hound, it is hard not to be reminded of similar scenes involving the character of Ash and her pet basset in Oshii's live-action cyberpunk film *Avalon* (2001). Like Ash, after lovingly preparing his dog's food, Batou first tastes it, as a mother might do for her baby.

87. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 242–43, 257–60.

88. Ibid., 273–74.

89. Ibid., 258, 273, quoting René Schérer and Guy Hocquenghem, *Co-ire, Recherche* 22 (1976): 76–82.

90. Donna Haraway, "Cyborgs to Companion Species: Reconfiguring Kinship in Technoscience," in *The Haraway Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 315–16.

91. Lisa Bode, "Oshii's Redemptive Pets and Killer Puppets," http://www.realtimearts.net/rt65/bode.html (accessed October 10, 2006).

92. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature,* trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 22.

Postscript

CARY WOLFE

ON "THE LIVING"

One of the hallmarks of posthumanism is ability to think about a variety of phenomena—phenomena that were previously lodged in ontologically or epistemologically discrete domains—in terms of dynamic, complex, nonlinear systems. Given that the movement from chaos theory to complexity theory and more recently to autopoiesis theory was made possible by shifting away from models derived from physics and mathematics, toward theoretical paradigms drawn from the life sciences (which are then redeployed to describe social, cultural, and political phenomena as well), an interesting question presents itself: what, if anything, is at stake in the difference between living and nonliving systems? Given the obvious interpenetration of living and nonliving systems in everything from biomedical to informatic systems, what, in short, is the specificity, the status, and the stake of "the living"? And how does the question of the living—that which is alive—complicate and challenge representational strategies by introducing problems of time, duration, movement, affect, and self-reference, in ways that in some sense pose a limit or barrier to what can be thought, known, drawn, and—more pointedly—rendered?

A Healing, Gentle Apocalypse: *Yokohama kaidashi kikō*

MARC HAIRSTON

Ashinano Hitoshi. *Yokohama kaidashi kikō (Yokohama Shopping Log)*. Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1995–2006. 14 volumes. ISBN 4-06-321050-2; 4-06-321055-3; 4-06-321061-8; 4-06-321066-9; 4-06-0321081-2; 4-06-321095-2; 4-06-321110-X; 4-06-321120-7; 4-06-321134-7; 4-06-321147-9; 4-06-3321159-2; 4-06-321165-7; 4-06-321171-1; 4-06-321176-2.

Postapocalyptic stories are a staple in anime and manga, usually presenting a depressing and frequently violent image of the future world. In the midst of these is a unique manga that depicts the view of a simple life in a gentle postapocalyptic world: *Yokohama kaidashi kikō* (generally translated as *Yokohama Shopping Log*). Created by Ashinano Hitoshi, *Yokohama kaidashi kikō* premiered in *Afternoon Magazine* in June 1994 and ended in February 2006.[1]

Set hundreds of years in the future, *Yokohama kaidashi kikō* centers on the quiet life of a female android named Alpha who runs a small coffee shop on the coastline in rural Miura. An unexplained environmental apocalypse of some sort occurred in the past, causing a rise in the sea levels and a drastic decrease in the human population, which is further diminishing with each passing generation. With fewer humans left to run things, the physical infrastructure of modern society is decaying and the technology of the past is slowly being forgotten. Alpha's "owner" used to run the café but went off to travel (and never appears in the series), leaving Alpha to keep operating the café.

The opening chapter follows Alpha as she takes an overnight shopping trip to Yokohama to buy coffee beans for the café, thus giving the series its title. She rides a motor scooter over broken highways with grass growing through the cracks and has to take an alternate route when she finds the main road is under water. Yokohama seems much smaller now, though the seventy-story Yokohama Landmark Tower still remains. After buying the coffee beans and doing some window shopping, she spends the night sleeping by the side of the road outside the town, then rides back to the café. Thus the first chapter sets the tone for the rest of the series. There is not much plot or story. Instead, *Yokohama kaidashi kikō* focuses on creating the mood and atmosphere of this future twilight world. Nothing much happens, but that "nothing much" unfolds with amazing beauty, grace, and serenity. Over the course of 140 chapters (and about 20 years within the story), this world is delicately sketched in by showing bits of Alpha's life and her interactions with her circle of friends, both humans and a few other androids.

Because the manga focuses more on the atmosphere than the storyline, it allows Ashinano to be more lyrical in his presentation of Alpha and her world. Frequently the only text for a chapter is a poetic narration by Alpha accompanying the images. In fact, a few chapters are purely visual with no text at all. There is a strong sense here of *mono no aware* ("a sensitivity to things"), the classic Japanese aesthetic sense of melancholy and an acceptance of the beauty inherent in the impermanence of things. Although common in much of Japanese art and literature, this concept rarely appears in manga or anime. An example of this *mono no aware* occurs in chapter 22, "Yokosuka Cruise," where Alpha takes an afternoon trip trying to find the first place that her owner took her to see years ago (3:101–16). She ends up at a bluff overlooking the drowned city of Yokosuka where she

runs into her friend "Sensei." Sensei, an elderly doctor and scientist, worked on robot research when she was young and helped develop the Alpha series of androids. As they watch the sunset, one by one the lights of the dead city begin to glow under the water until the expanse of the lost city can be seen stretching out into the darkened ocean (Figure 1). Alpha's thoughts serve as an elegiac commentary on the scene. "These lights that used to shine for practical purposes now just shine only for the sake of shining . . . Flowers of light left for us by people of the past" (3:113–16).

Another example of *mono no aware* appears in chapter 124, "Heartbeat," where Alpha finds an old model-airplane engine in the shop owner's storage shed and sets about to fix it (13:51–66). She ends up using what little model airplane fuel she has, and during the engine's short run (Figure 2) she observes, "With all its might the engine expresses its joy of running after so many decades. It spins like it's crying while hurrying, rushing, as if it's saying 'I will not leave a drop of what might be the last the last bit of fuel ever'" (13:60). And then it dies, allowing the silence of the countryside to return.

Yokohama kaidashi kikō is often referred to as an *iyashi kei* ("healing type") manga. The term is used to refer to anything (an artwork, a piece of music, a person, even a scenic view) that creates a sense of peace and spiritual satisfaction. It serves as an emotional refreshment for the stress-filled viewer in need of such an antidote to modern life. Alpha lives in a deliberately slow-paced world full of small, ordinary details showing the reader that life is to be enjoyed and savored, not something to be rushed through. This harkens back to the classic idea



FIGURE 1. Alpha and Sensei looking at the drowned city of Yokosuka at night. Used by permission of Kodansha.

of beauty and art serving the primary purpose of uplifting and enriching the soul. While other manga and anime series share some of the same themes (and occasional sentimentality) as *Yokohama kaidashi kikō,* only a very few fall into the same *iyashi kei* category, most notably Amano Kozue's manga *ARIA.*[2]

Part of the appeal of *Yokohama kaidashi kikō* lies in its mysteries. Ashinano creates a world that is both believable and intriguingly incomplete. What was the catastrophe that changed the world, and why is humanity dying out? Why do the male androids have only a short lifespan while the female androids seem to last forever? For that matter, the very existence of the androids is the central mystery of the manga. How could a society that has lost the ability to keep more than a few old airplanes flying have the technology to create such near-human androids? What was the reason for their creation?



FIGURE 2. Alpha's meditation as she watches a model airplane engine running. Used by permission of Kodansha.

The story hints that the purpose of these eternal (and eternally young) androids is to preserve the memory of humanity's existence once the people are gone.

After its twelve-year run, the final chapter of series ends where it began, with Alpha repeating her shopping trip into Yokohama and then returning to the café (14:137–52). On the way back home, we hear Alpha's thoughts as she addresses the reader directly: "My place is Café Alpha. The things I have seen and everyone I have known, I will never forget. Those days when the whole world had been like a festival slowly calmed down. The gentle time that will later come to be called the 'Age of Calm Evening.' Let me show you that brief moment before night comes. The night of humanity . . . May it be a peaceful age" (14:149–52).

It is not surprising that scores of anime and manga present depressing apocalyptic visions where the world ends with violent destruction and upheavals. This is the escapism of our era, our way of dealing with our own worries and fears about the future. The creation of *Yokohama kaidashi kikō* gives us something much more rare and precious: a postapocalyptic manga with a hopeful vision. What *Yokohama kaidashi kikō* is saying is that maybe *this* is how the world will end, not with a whimper, not with a bang, but with a peaceful sigh of wistful contentment. Living as we do in these precarious and uncertain times, that is a strangely reassuring message.

Notes

I am grateful to Dr. Watanabe Yuki for her help in this review.

1. *Yokohama kaidashi kikō* is available in English only in unofficial online translations: *Record of a Yokohama Shopping Trip* at http://ykk.misago.org and *Café Alpha Manga Translations* at http://www.cafealpha.org/ (both accessed November 2006). The direct quotations in this review were translated from the Japanese by Dr. Watanabe Yuki.

2. Amano Kozue, *ARIA,* 12 vols. (Tokyo: Mag-Garden, 2002–2008).

Lost in Transition: Train Men and Dolls in Millennial Japan

SUSAN NAPIER

In 2005 the *Densha otoko* phenomenon swept Japan. Purporting to be the real-life story of a young *otaku* (obsessive technogeek) who finds romance after he defends an attractive young lady on a train, *Densha otoko* or "Train Man" was first a book, then a movie, and finally a hit television series. In novel form, the narrative is particularly fascinating for its text, which is created entirely of e-mail messages between the hero, nicknamed Train Man, and a group of likeminded friends on the Internet who create a supportive and warm community out of the thinness of cyberspace. Both film and television series augment and enrich these characterizations, especially of the hapless hero who slowly transcends *otaku*-hood to win the girl of his dreams.

The television series with its longer narrative arc was able to develop the story more fully and enlarge on or even create episodes that delved more deeply into the heart of the characters. One of the most heartfelt of these episodes involves dolls (*ningyō*)—or perhaps one should say "figures," since these dolls belong to the male protagonist rather than the female. In this episode, which takes place about halfway through the series, Train Man fears that he may have lost the girl and decides that he must stop being such an *otaku*. How to accomplish this? We see him go to his small cluttered room and look around at his enormous collection of action figures. He picks one up, stares at it, and puts it down again, clearly in much turmoil of mind. Finally, he gets out a box and begins it to fill it with the action figures. Although most are generic anime-esque characters, he particularly hesitates on encountering one of them—a doll from the immensely popular science fiction anime series *Gundam* (1979–present, and very much an object of *otaku* fandom). This doll he salutes, clearly with a lump in his throat. Then, in a scene that Japanese viewers would recognize as a traditional form of abandonment, he places the box in the river and walks away.

Train Man's actions could be read as a form of growing up. By renouncing his fantasy world, he indicates that he is now willing to start a real-life relationship with another human being. But the television series itself is a wish-fulfilling fantasy. Ultimately, he gets to have his dolls and his lady too. The box is returned to him, and his girlfriend indicates that the dolls are not a problem. In fact, she too collects dolls.

Dolls and action figures are big business in Japan. They are also works of art, icons of ideology and emotion, and objects of fetishization. In my research on dolls in Tokyo last year, I spent a great deal of time in Akihabara, the area of Tokyo that as a center for the latest techno-products used to be known as the "electric city" but might equally well be known as the "doll city" today. My trips to Akihabara were like going from sunshine into shadow. I would start in a well-lit mammoth store such as Laox, stuffed with seemingly every gadget, toy, and action figure under the sun; then progress to smaller places specializing in dolls or sometimes simply doll parts (one particularly distinctive store had huge cabinets full of glass dolls' eyes, like something from *Blade Runner* [1982]); to truly specialized places—warrens of glass cases owned by individuals that exhibited their owners' particular tastes, ranging from the innocuous, like Barbie dolls and trading cards, to the disturbing—dolls in bondage or even simply dismembered doll torsos rising from a rose-blossom-shaped pool of blood. These stores would often sell doll-centered magazines, usually containing pictures of mutilated nude dolls in disorientingly beautiful scenes and exquisitely lit and photographed. My last stop would usually be an upper floor of a "Costume Shop" where life-sized dolls in various costumes, ranging from cute schoolgirl uniforms to provocative French maid outfits, would be available for prices starting at 50,000 yen. These are of course the stores

frequented by *otaku,* who in recent years have become one of the driving forces behind what might be called the doll worship subculture of contemporary Japan.

All cultures have had dolls or puppets, human simulacrums as objects of play, collection, or even as spiritual aids. In fact, the doll, particularly in puppet form, has a long history of associations with the sacred and the supernatural. Victoria Nelson points out in *The Secret Life of Puppets,*

> The human simulacrum in particular, whether stationary or moving, two or three dimensional, in its contemporary form of children's dolls or robots, cyborgs, and the like in popular film and literature, is an object we once worshipped . . . the point of literal congruence between transcendental spirit and physical matter, and thus a great and holy mystery.[1]

But dolls may also serve another, more homely purpose that may be particularly crucial in postindustrial societies such as Japan, where, as *Densha otoko* suggests, our interaction with others is increasingly "virtual." This is the notion of the doll as a transitional object, as developed by D. W. Winnicott, a British psychoanalyst and pediatrician.[2] Traditionally, the transitional object is considered an artifact of childhood. As the child begins to separate from its mother, it finds the process frightening and confusing. A transitional object is something that helps in the process of separation. Often, it is a blanket or perhaps a cuddly toy, but frequently it is a doll. In psychoanalytic terms, the doll (or other object) is a stand-in for the mother's breast that the infant initially associates as part of him/herself.

Originally, transitional object theory centered around infancy and childhood, but in recent years the notion of adults needing transitional objects at certain times in their lives has come into circulation. This need is probably related to what Michael Szollosy in his article on Winnicott's theories calls the "post-modern crisis."[3] He specifies this crisis as arising from a world of growing depersonalization, where the analysand's lack emotional engagement with the environment and complain of a general sense of nonbeing, of existing as an object in a world of meaningless objects.

Perhaps for *otaku* in particular, who usually see themselves as outsiders, the doll can be a defense against the emptiness (*kyomu*) that seems to swirl around much of modern Japanese life. It is perhaps no accident that dolls are related in important ways to a number of significant anime series and films. This is most obvious in the anime *Ghost in the Shell* (1995, *Kôkaku kidôtai*) and *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* (2004, *Inosensu*) by director Oshii Mamoru. Whereas the first film brings up the notion of soul in a cyborg body, *Innocence* highlights various forms of bonding—such as with pets or through friendship and romantic love—and emphasizes the ambiguous nature of cyborgs and dolls and our ambivalent connection to them, to give us a nightmare (or is it a dream?) scenario of a posthuman world. In *Innocence* the dolls are "sexroids," life-sized, anatomically correct dolls that have had the souls of little girls illegally imbedded in them. However, these girls/dolls refuse to be passive figures for the male. In several horrifying scenes they turn violently murderous. They are transitional objects in a number of senses—in their passive form they embody what the Akihabara dolls hint at: they serve as substitutes for real women to a male who may or may not be able to transition from the virtual to the real. But they also embody the problematic transition between the human and the technology that is all around us.

It may be that dolls serve both a transitional and a sacred function. Not only can they be a comforting bridge to an adult form of reality (as in *Densha otoko*) but, in straddling the mysterious boundary between human and other, between concrete reality and the virtual worlds of imagination and play, they open up

a bridge between reality and its Other, be that supernatural, sacred, or virtual. In this regard dolls may be the perfect vessel to emblemize a modern Japan where boundaries are dissolving between mundane life and the virtual reality of games, toys, anime/manga, and cyberculture in general.

At the denouement of *Innocence,* one of the little girls explains why she wants to be rescued from her sexroid body. She cries out, "I didn't want to become a doll!" To which Motoko comments, "But maybe if the dolls had voices, they would say that they didn't want to become human?" The movie refuses to answer that question but prefers to leave us at the boundary line, free to move around in our own versions of a puppet play. As for Train Man, whose very name suggests a person in transition, the modern world at its best can offer real and virtual connections that are perhaps all equally satisfying.

Notes

1. Victoria Nelson, *The Secret Life of Puppets* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 29–30.

2. D. W. Winnicott, *Through Paediatrics to Psychoanalysis* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

3. Michael Szollosy, "Winnicott's Potential Spaces: Using Psychoanalytic Theory to Redress the Crises of Postmodern Culture," *Psyche Matters,* http://www.psychematters.com/papers/szollosy.htm (accessed November 27, 2006).

Howl's Moving Castle

ANTONIA LEVI

Miyazaki, Hayao (director). *Hauru no ugoku shiro.* 2004. Translated as *Howl's Moving Castle,* subtitled DVD. Walt Disney Home Entertainment, 2006. ASIN: B000CDGVOE.

Diana Wynne Jones. *Howl's Moving Castle.* New York: HarperCollins, 1986. ISBN: 0-06-441034-X.

Films based on popular novels always evoke a dilemma. If too faithful to the book, they may be charged with having simply illustrated a work from the literary canon; if too different from the original, fans of the novel complain that it is not what they came to see. In *Howl's Moving Castle,* Miyazaki gets away with venturing very far from Diana Wynne Jones's original story, mostly because the fan base for his films and for Jones's young adult fantasies do not overlap much. However, for those who are familiar with both the book and the film, watching *Howl's Moving Castle* is a bit like reading very good fan fiction. The premise, the main characters, and the settings are the same, but Miyazaki has used them to tell a completely different story. Whereas Jones uses Sophie, Howl, and Calcifer in a fairytale format to tell a story about challenging class and gender expectations, Miyazaki uses the same characters to tell a story about personal loyalty, love, and war.

This contrast is not immediately apparent in the film, since the first third seems to follow the novel fairly closely, with only small changes only later revealed to have major impact on the overall plot. In both novel and film, a young woman named Sophie is wasting her life by refusing to challenge the norms of the fairytale society in which she lives. "It is quite a misfortune to be born the eldest of three," Jones writes in the novel's first paragraph: "Everyone knows you are the one who will fail first and worst, if the three of you set out to seek your fortunes." In the film, the same sentiment is spoken by Sophie's sister Lettie, but we see no more of Lettie or very much of the third sister Martha. Thus, the novel's major story—three young women challenging their society's assumptions and expectations and using different stratagems to build lives for themselves—is replaced by that of Sophie alone and her triumph over her own timidity and lack of self-confidence.

The means by which Sophie is forced to face her issues also appear similar but are subtly different. In both novel and film, the Wicked Witch

of the Waste transforms her into an old crone. In the novel, the witch's motives are initially unclear; only later are they revealed to be professional rivalry with Sophie, for, although unaware of her powers, Sophie herself is a very powerful witch who stitches spells into the hats and clothing she sews. But in the film, the witch's battle is with the wizard Howl. Sophie, an innocent bystander, is dragged into it due to an earlier, accidental encounter with the wizard. The central story of her suppressed witchy powers and the fact that she is unconsciously maintaining the old-age spell herself are both muted.

However, these themes are not entirely lost. Although Miyazaki never references them in the script, he does show these themes through Sophie's many incarnations and changes in appearance. The film shows her in four basic forms: her original brunette girl self, a humpbacked old crone, an upright old lady, and a young woman with prematurely grey hair. She shifts back and forth between these forms depending on her mood and the situation, thus revealing that she has control over the spell. A most striking example occurs when she tells Howl that she is not pretty. As she says this, she is in her young girl with grey hair form. When he replies that she *is* beautiful (in both the book and the film, Howl sees through the spell almost immediately), she changes instantly back into her crone form.

The film's Sophie is also shown stitching blue triangles into Howl's ruined clothing, but this has no real meaning because of how Howl's part of the story has been changed. In the novel, Howl's story centers on his immaturity, his vanity, his laziness, the importance he places on physical beauty, and his womanizing. The legend that he eats young women's hearts and has no heart himself is a central metaphor, and the spells Sophie unwittingly stitches into his garments are a major plot point. But in the film, Sophie's stitch-spells have little meaning, not only because Sophie's witch powers are less pivotal but also because Howl's central story concerns war rather than his vanity, immaturity, or womanizing.

Howl is still vain and immature in the film, but his main issue relates to an ongoing conflict in which both sides are trying to draft his services. Although the novel has a subplot about two kingdoms trying to recruit Howl to find a missing prince, the kingdoms are not at war. Yet a war is central to Howl's part of the film where, despite his emotional cowardice, he becomes an antiwar hero even before he meets Sophie. He recognizes that the war is pointless and spends his nights defending the innocent on all sides from hideous organic bombs that are often actually wizards transformed into weapons. To do so he must transform into a monstrous form himself: a huge predatory bird. The more often he changes and the longer he remains in bird form, however, the harder it is for him to return to his human form. Howl is a wonderful metaphor for what happens to soldiers—even antisoldiers—in war. He fights only to defend others, especially those he loves, but the act of fighting is turning him into a monster. Howl's dilemma also plays into Sophie's story in that she takes the greatest physical and emotional risk of her life by attempting to save Howl from the war and from himself.

The relationship between Howl and Calcifer, the fire demon who holds Howl's heart, remains fairly faithful to the novel, but its importance in the film is increased due to how the film treats the issue of family. Although family is central to both film and novel, the latter deals primarily with biological family and the need to define oneself as an individual within it. In contrast, the film focuses on a created family of choice, and sees the creation of that family as part of the self-definition of both Sophie and Howl.

In the novel, Sophie's biological family poses an obstacle to—or at least a complication in—her personal development. Much of what is holds her back is society's understanding of what it means to be the eldest daughter. Her stepmother plays on this, arguing that it is

right and proper that Sophie remain in the shop as an unpaid apprentice since she will eventually inherit the business. Seeing through this manipulation and refusing to go along with it becomes a major part of Sophie's story. So is her growing understanding and forgiveness of her stepmother, whom she comes to see as neither saintly nor evil but a young and pretty widow trying desperately to reclaim some sort of life without using outright brutality toward the three girls in her care. Sophie also must come to terms with her own self-inflicted feelings of protectiveness toward her younger sisters. In fact, Sophie's sisters are quite capable of taking care of themselves and have actually preceded her into the adult world of self-determination.

In the film, Sophie's biological family does not play a major role. The mother—not stepmother—makes two short appearances, and her sister Lettie appears once. Neither is well defined as a character and both are used mostly for exposition and plotting (probably to simplify the plot into a two-hour film). Whereas the novel is a complex web of interconnected stories, Miyazaki focuses on only two: Sophie's coming of age and the solution to Howl and Calcifer's dilemma. I personally regretted that this meant also cutting out one of the novel's most interesting digressions. When one of the castle's doors turns out to lead to our universe and to twentieth-century Wales, Sophie learns that the true name of the great wizard Howl is Howell Jenkins and that he is regarded by his disapproving sister as a lazy good-for-nothing.

The elimination of the family themes, however necessary for producing a film, nonetheless has ramifications. Miyazaki kept some family themes but creates a family of people who do not share biological connections: Sophie, Howl, Calcifer, a boy apprentice named Markl (a teen named Michael in the novel), a senile Witch of the Waste (she remains young in the novel), a bespelled scarecrow whose story is never developed, and a dog with cut vocal cords (there is a bespelled dog in the novel, but he is not Heen). The family in this case is mostly the creation of Howl and Sophie, and its creation is a part of their personal coming of age rather than an obstacle or complication.

The good news for those who love Sophie and Howl is that because the film is so different from the book, fans get two appealing stories about the same characters.[1] Diana Wynne Jones loved the way Miyazaki brought her characters to the screen, and rather enjoyed the new story. She also enjoyed meeting Miyazaki. "I don't think I've ever met anyone before who thinks like I do," she said. "He saw my books from the inside out."[2]

Notes

1. Actually, there are three stories about Howl and Sophie. They also appear in another novel by Jones set in the fairytale land of Ingary: *Castle in the Air* (not to be confused with Miyazaki's *Castle in the Sky*), although in that novel, they are supporting rather than central characters.

2. Nick Bradshaw, "He Saw My Books from the Inside Out," *Telegraph.co.uk* (September 23, 2005), http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2005/09/23/bfwynne23.xml (accessed October 30, 2006).

Playing Outside the Box with *Mind Game*

PAUL JACKSON

Yuasa, Masaaki (director). *Maindo geemu*, 2004. Translated as *Mind Game*, subtitled Japanese DVD. Big Time Entertainment, 2004. ASIN B0001X9D90.

The notion of what constitutes avant-garde film has always been contentious. Defining anime variations, it seems, has also been difficult. The commonly cited characteristics of individual artists—low budgets and mainstream opposition—don't quite apply to *Mind Game*, director Yuasa Masaaki's debut feature. But, paradoxically, neither does it resemble more typical anime films.

Therein lies the film's strength—formal experimentation paired with a popular narrative. Using traditional 2D cel animation, rotoscoping, and computer-generated effects, among other techniques, *Mind Game* displays a kaleidoscopic patchwork of filmmaking practices.[1]

The plot follows Nishi, a twenty-year-old manga artist, who by chance runs into Myon, a physically well-endowed past love from high school. Unbeknownst to Nishi, Myon is being followed by two yakuza in search of her father to settle debts. At her family yakitori restaurant, Myon introduces her fiancé to a predictably devastated Nishi. Enter the two pursuing yakuza, and a heartbroken, terrified Nishi is killed. Moments later, standing before God, he is instructed to walk through a red portal and disappear. Meanwhile, God opens a path back to earth. Naturally, grief-stricken Nishi defies God's instruction and runs to the earthbound path, traversing time and space until he is back in his body seconds before his murder. This time, Nishi kills the yakuza and flees with Myon and her sister Yan in tow. A high-speed car chase ensues, culminating in Nishi and company being swallowed by a whale.

Yuasa is no stranger to eccentric plots and challenging aesthetics, having previously worked as storyboard artist and animation producer on the similarly experimental *Cat Soup* (2001, *Nekojiru-so*). The story of anthropomorphic cat siblings Nyako and Nyatta, *Cat Soup* charts the journey their souls undertake as Nyatta's body lies on the brink of death. Traditional narrative devices are dropped in favor of a series of related vignettes (this technique is carried over into *Mind Game* and perhaps explains its occasional pacing problems). *Cat Soup*'s central set piece of a giant mechanical clock reversing time is visualized using many of the techniques so prominent in *Mind Game*: men evolve and devolve in a barrage of digital brush strokes, a firing squad resurrects the dead with a chalk-like finish, and fatal accidents are rewound in abstract landscapes. However, for all the similarities between the two films, one major difference cannot be overlooked. Whereas *Cat Soup* is an exercise in decoding the signifiers, *Mind Game* is much more traditional in its storytelling. Aside from the obvious questions (i.e., how can Nishi reverse time?), *Mind Game* makes perfect sense by its own logic.

It is perhaps more accurate to place *Mind Game* alongside Gainax's *FLCL* (2000). Both mix the mundane, absurd, and experimental; are thematically similar; and are equally entrenched in popular culture. Like *FLCL*, *Mind Game*'s intertextual references and allusions aren't exclusively Japanese. In fact, *Village Voice* commentator Michael Atkinson tellingly describes the film as "anti-anime."[2] Once inside the whale, Nishi, Myon and Yan meet Jiisan, a man who has been living inside for more than thirty years. The obvious Western comparison is Disney's animated film *Pinocchio* (1940), but Jiisan's home of raised platforms and rickety walkways also recalls Disney's *Swiss Family Robinson* (1960). *Mind Game* shares with *Swiss Family Robinson* the same sense of an unlikely utopia away from society's trappings, even if material needs still exist. Indeed, the first thing Jiisan utters is "I've got a radio." Of course, the film subverts such similarities exponentially. Like *Swiss Family Robinson,* the characters of *Mind Game* also befriend the "locals." Whereas the *Robinson* animals were incarcerated against their will, Jiisan's collection of fish preserves species thought long extinct, including a Loch Ness–style monster.

Furthermore, Yuasa incorporates three musical sequences that recall both Disney and the overt sexualization of Japanese animation, yet fully succumb to neither. The first depicts a *Fantasia*-style (1940) routine of synchronized swimming, as the characters are freed from their predicament for the first time. Colors become exceptionally bright and change freely, akin to Disney's *The Lion King* (1994). Later, the girls joyously skip over bamboo penile extensions worn by Nishi and Jiisan, as the floor

radiates colors like some sort of primal disco. The second sees Yan, now a performance artist, wearing a bondage-style mask and water filled balloons over her chest and crotch. She douses herself with paint before throwing her newly curvaceous body at a circular canvas; each color print becomes a frame of a zoetrope-like sequence. Hosepipes feed her balloon-made breasts, which, toward the end of the sequence, burst and drench the onlookers.

The final "dance" sequence sees Nishi and Myon make love for the first time. Perhaps the most technically accomplished scene in the film, the routine is visualized using a breathtaking array of animation techniques. The characters embrace moments before morphing into insect-like creatures and back again. Later, seismic lines seem to punctuate the skin, knowingly intercut with Freudian images of computer-generated trains and tunnels. Finally, the couple are rendered using what appears to be paint-on-film, recalling scenes from *Cat Soup*.

Through adopting Disney conventions, Yuasa imbues sex with a childlike innocence. Whereas in Disney films sex is noticeable only by its absence and in anime is highlighted by its all-too-frequent gratuitousness, in *Mind Game*, for all its stylistic innovation, sex is presented as matter-of-fact. Although the scene is significant to those concerned, for the audience it is most noteworthy for its beauty and lack of shock value.

To this end, as much as *Mind Game* doesn't adhere to Disney's model, despite some intentional similarities, neither does its content or style resemble more typically Japanese works. Yuasa is as at home subverting anime stereotypes as he is Disney iconography. The usual Tokyo-centric setting is dropped in favor of Osaka. While both Myon's exaggerated form and the caricature yakuza could have walked out of a pulpy manga serial or a less original anime, Yuasa deliberately introduces anime stereotypes only to shatter them before the film's climax. This is later made clear in an imagined sci-fi sequence that shows an animated Robin Nishi (author of the original manga) giving advice to three adoring fans. His body exaggerated and sexualized like Myon's before it, his dialogue is almost exclusively marked by curse-filled quips ("Fuck yeah!"). Significantly, this scene reveals the thematic key to the film: Robin advises, "Have fun and become a man, not a clone, but someone who transcends."

Nishi begins the film as a loser, loveless, and without a career. But through the course of the narrative, he defies almost all of life's restrictions. First, he cheats death and reverses time, allowing himself a second chance. Later, he makes love to Myon and repairs a broken ankle. During the escape sequence he is even seen in Japanese superhero guises (Ultraman, Gridman), before finally floating above the city. Transcendence is the key.

The plot follows a similar path. Act 1 is rendered in drab grays and dull reds. Lines are drawn atypically rough, and the plot is rife with anime clichés. Act 2, inside the whale, culminates in the delirious escape sequence. Finally, Act 3 returns to the "real" world, but gone are the angular stylings in favor of more photo-realistic animation: like the characters, we are seeing the world from a fresh perspective. This altered perception is further accentuated through the film's cyclical narrative. Opening with a montage of Japanese life, consisting of unfamiliar people, places, and times, the film ends with the same sequence. This time, however, the characters are recognizable as youthful incarnations of Nishi and company. Although the images are the same, our new understanding irrevocably alters their meaning.

Such a clear narrative structure also reveals certain weaknesses. Act 1 is occasionally laboriously slow compared to later scenes—this isn't the intentional leisurely pace you might expect from a Ghibli film, for example, but a glut of unimportant information—and its subplots are frustratingly forgotten by the film's climax. The first thirty minutes establish the cyclical

narrative but nonetheless stand as an elaborately wrought set-up whose sole purpose, it seems, is to move the principal characters into place ready for Act 2. Although amusing, the banter-filled relationship between the pursuing yakuza is likewise overplayed and given disproportionate screen time.

That said, *Mind Game* remains a remarkable achievement. But, although significant, it would be wrong to fully praise (or dismiss) the film on its avant-garde or "anti-anime" credentials alone. Like any director who knowledgably deviates from a set of codes and conventions, be they genre or production techniques, Yuasa depends on anime practices as much as he denounces them. Yuasa's experimentation seems to arise as a natural extension of fully realized characters, and questions of why and how eventually fall into insignificance. The film may be a few pieces short of a neat genre label, but *Mind Game* is all the better for it. Indeed, a better combination of popular and avant-garde sensibilities has arguably never been done in the field of anime.

Notes

1. *Mind Game* is a region 2 NTSC Japanese DVD with optional English subtitles.

2. Michael Atkinson, "Excess Express: Mind Trips and Psychotic Inventions at Annual Asian Series," *The Village Voice,* June 13, 2005, http://www.villagevoice.com/film/0524,atkinson3,64893,20.html (accessed June 10, 2006).

From Transnationalization to Globalization: The Experience of Hong Kong

WENDY SIUYI WONG

Kwai-Cheung Lo. *Chinese Face/Off: The Transnational Popular Culture of Hong Kong.* Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005. ISBN: 0-252-07228-6.

In East and Southeast Asia, the influence of Japanese manga and anime is prominent. Since the 1960s, comics and animation from Japan have been popular leisure materials in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea. The growth of Japanese manga and anime in this region contributed to the spread of manga and anime to Europe and North America in the 1990s.

Among these regions, Hong Kong has been able to maintain its unique local culture by hybridizing others. Kwai-Cheung Lo's book offers insight into globalization and transnational identity by examining such topics as newspaper columns, book culture, film, kung-fu comics, and theme parks.

While this book analyzes language, images, and objects found in Hong Kong popular culture, Lo also incorporates a global and transnational perspective, declaring that the effect of English subtitles in Hong Kong films is "to represent a certain cultural specificity or designate certain ethnic characteristics are a hindrance that—paradoxically—facilitates globalization" (19). Action movies and kung-fu comics as examples demonstrate how Hong Kong popular culture struggles to form its own identity when encountering external influences, a process of global localization or "glocalization."

Kung-fu comics, like many popular culture genres in Hong Kong, have a long history of hybridizing their own Chinese tradition with foreign examples. We can trace the American influence on Hong Kong comics back to the 1920s Shanghai cartoon character Mr. Wang (Wang Xiansheng), created by Yeh Qian-yu and published in *Shanghai Sketch* in 1928. This genre of miniseries entertainment cartoons was influenced by Western/American cartoons such as *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday* (1884) by Gilbert Daliziel and *The Yellow Kid* (1896) by Richard Outcault.

American cartoon books in English were available in Hong Kong before the Second World War. By the early 1950s, some American cartoon books had been translated into Chinese and published in Hong Kong, popularizing

characters such as Pinocchio, Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and Elmer Fudd. Due to the lack of new *manhua* developments in Mainland China and the relative lack of experience and exposure of many local cartoonists, American cartoon books became the highest form of *manhua* available to Hong Kong readers at that time. As a result, many locally produced cartoons exhibited obvious American influences.

With the advent of free wireless television broadcasts in Hong Kong in 1967, the 1970s saw an increasing influence of Japanese popular culture in Hong Kong through television and pirated Japanese manga. Japanese television became prime-time entertainment in the early 1970s, with programs such as *Young Sparkler* (1969–70, *Sign wa V*).[1] Children's afternoon viewing time was filled with Japanese cartoons, including *Candy Candy* (1976–79, *Kyandi Kyandi*), *Ultraman* (1979–80, *Za Urutoraman*), *Little Monk Ikkyu* (1975–82, *Ikkyu-san*), *Doraemon* (1973, 1979–present), and many others. Generally speaking, Hong Kong's younger generations still tend to identify more with Japanese manga and anime characters than with American comics and cartoons. Apart from the "official" distribution channel through television, "unauthorized" Japanese manga reproduction and distribution became widespread in the mid-1960s.

Several popular manga in the 1960s, including *Astro Boy* (1952–68, *Tetsuwan Atomu*) and *Princess Knight* (1953–56, 1958–59, 1963–66, *Ribon no kishi*) by Tezuka Osamu, and Mochizuki Mikiya's *Wild 7* (1969–79, *Wairudo 7*), were among the titles reproduced without copyright authorization by Hong Kong and Taiwanese publishers. At that time, copyright issues were not widely considered to be important by Chinese readers or even by many of the copyright holders of the pirated Japanese manga. The booming popularity of Japanese manga in 1970s Hong Kong was actively initiated by Hong Kong publishers themselves, rather than the Japanese manga publishing houses. Yet, throughout the decades, Hong Kong comic artists were able to develop a genre and style of their own.[2]

Kung-fu comics integrate American and Japanese action comics, and are an excellent demonstration of the globalization of popular culture where origin is no longer important. When Hong Kong action movies traveled to Hollywood along with Jackie Chan, John Woo, Chow Yun Fat, and Jet Li, Western audiences were already familiar with them. At the same time, the genre retained its authenticity. In his book, Lo is able to articulate this circular process of transnationalization of the local in a global context.

For readers interested in the transnationalization of Japanese comics and anime, Part 2, "Image Is Everything," provides interesting insights into the direction manga and anime might take in Europe and North America in the future. We can call this a second flow of globalization led by Japan rather than by American popular culture. The influence of Japanese manga and anime are still emerging in European and North American countries, so local production of Japanese-style manga and anime has yet to mature. Given time, it may be possible to see Hong Kong's experience duplicated somewhere in Western countries.

Some cultural critics term this phenomenon "Japanization of the West." With the rising economic power of China, speculation about China's future role in global popular culture is growing. Whether it is called "Japanization of the West" or "Asianization of the West," the phenomenon is yet to be defined and fully debated. At the end of his book, Lo shifts the focus of the transnationalization discussion from the self-fabricated identity of "Chineseness" to the relocation of Chineseness through global icons such as giant pandas, Mickey Mouse, and Disneyland in Hong Kong. What are the implications of this latest glocalization development on the future development of globalization? The answer has yet to be discovered.

In his book, Lo successfully analyzes selected topics of Hong Kong popular culture within the context of globalization studies. This work will prove to be a good reference for the study of future globalization trends in European and North American countries.

Notes

1. Yoshiko Nakano, "Who Initiates a Global Flow? Japanese Popular Culture in Asia," *Visual Communication* 1, no. 2 (2002): 229–53.

2. Wendy Siuyi Wong, "Hong Kong Comic Strips and Japanese Manga: A Historical Perspective on the Influence of American and Japanese Comics on Hong Kong Manhua," *Design Discourse*, Inaugural Preparatory Issue (2004): 22–37.

"Always Exoticize!" Cyborg Identities and the Challenge of the Nonhuman in *Full Metal Apache*

JOSHUA PAUL DALE

Takayuki Tatsumi. *Full Metal Apache: Transactions between Cyberpunk Japan and Avant-Pop America*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006. ISBN 0-8223-3774-6.

As well as offering a fine comparative study of Japanese and American literary and cultural productions, Tatsumi Takayuki's new book also intervenes in the critical debates surrounding orientalism and exoticism. This is especially relevant considering the recent international popularity of things Japanese, particularly anime and manga. Tatsumi's book provides a valuable history of the cross-cultural interactions that first created and now nurture this sudden desire for contemporary Japanese cultural products, whose appeal is largely based on a perceived difference between stylish new Japanese products and the old and familiar "oriental" exotic stereotypes of, as Tatsumi succinctly puts it "Fujiyama-geisha-sushi-harakiri" (4).

Around a century ago, when these stereotypes seemed fresh and new, the United States and other Western countries were gripped by a craze for acquiring art and collectibles from the Far East. According to Thomas Kim, the boom in collecting these exotic products—from screens to fans, porcelain to scrolls—coincided with the development of consumerism: by bringing these objects into their homes, middle-class consumers from industrialized societies attempted to construct their identity as modern subjects, whose assumed superiority to Asian "others" did not preclude learning the art of aesthetic appreciation from ancient, exotic cultures. "Collectors seemed to imagine Japan emerging from a time capsule," Kim writes, "and in large part the Oriental message from the past was conceived as an education in beauty and order."[1] Does the new millennial boom for high-tech Japanese exotica represent a message from a time capsule of the future rather than the past? Is it a call to become postmodern subjects with a new aesthetic, able to navigate the dizzying world of late-capitalist consumerism without falling into the condescending racism that characterized the past consumption of the exotic Orient?

To trace Tatsumi's nuanced analysis of this question and give a taste of his eclectic and multilayered style, I follow his exegesis of the title *Full Metal Apache*. Tatsumi begins with Tsukamoto Shin'ya's two recent films *Tetsuo* (1989) and *Tetsuo II: Body Hammer* (1992), which describe the transformation of an ordinary Japanese salaryman, and later a group of skinheads, into metallicized cyborg bioweapons. While acknowledging the debt these films have to American cyberpunk science fiction, Tatsumi outlines the postwar Japanese cultural history that provides an additional antecedent to Tsukamoto's theme of the outlaw bonding of metal and human. In the closing days of World War II, the Osaka munitions factory, the largest in Asia, was bombed to ruins. After the war, indigent people squatting in rough shacks across the river—Koreans, Okinawans, and Japanese

living on the fringes of society—realized the value of the metal scrap embedded in the ruins and began to forage for it. If they could evade police—not easy to do when weighted down with a hundred pounds of metal—they could sell the scrap for huge profits (158).

Earlier in the book, when Tatsumi analyzes Japan's self-exoticizing literary tradition of the "deep North gothic," he details the historically marginal status of people forced by circumstances to live on Japan's flood-prone riverbanks. He also points out that even this indigenous literary form was influenced by the multicultural voice of Lafcadio Hearn. In a similar vein, the Osaka scrap-metal thieves were dubbed "Japanese Apaches" by the media. This sobriquet elevated them to a heroic status that appealed to Japanese film audiences, who romanticized the Apache Indian characters in Hollywood westerns directed by John Ford and others (159).

The untamed, outlaw spirit attached to this nickname inspired Komatsu Sakyō's 1964 science fiction novel *Nippon Apacchi-Zoku* (*The Japanese Apache*). Komatsu seized on the metal scavengers' description of themselves as people who "eat iron scrap," when they turn junk into money for food (161). In *The Japanese Apache,* Komatsu creates a new species of "metallivorous" humans who literally eat iron and excrete high-quality steel. This is an example of Tatsumi's theory of "creative masochism," to which he refers periodically throughout *Full Metal Apache.* The postwar Japanese identity was formed through the ability to press on through the pain of reconstruction and emerge triumphant into what Tatsumi terms the "Pax Japonica" (44).

Finally, the title *Full Metal Apache* invokes Stanley Kubrick's 1989 film *Full Metal Jacket,* in which, Tatsumi maintains, "the western discourse of orientalism . . . turns out to be closely intertwined with the western construction of cyborgian subjectivity" (169). Ultimately, Tatsumi's argument for the connection between Vietnam War films and cyborgian subjectivity, which he bases on the American fear of "high-tech Mongoloid soldiers as a type of cyborg," fails to convince (169). By convention, this filmic genre always showcases American technological superiority and represents the Vietnamese Other with colonialist narratives of primitivism (or, at best, noble savagery).

This is one example of an unfortunate tendency in *Full Metal Apache*: occasionally, the analysis is too cavalier as it skips from one point to another. But in a previous chapter on the works of William Gibson and Richard Calder, Tatsumi effectively traces the cyborg identity as it impacts on Western subjectivity through cyberpunk science fiction; in fact, the reader often finds that weak points in the text are addressed elsewhere in the book.

Full Metal Apache shows its strengths articulating the contemporary Japanese identity. Tatsumi's Pax Japonica is not merely a peace built by economic rather than military might. Instead, his more radical insight is that the Japanese identity is constructed along the lines of the Emperor's postwar fate: the Emperor's descent from divine status into a media-enabled figurehead is directly linked to the reconstruction of individuality in Japan through frenzied consumerism. Drawing from Donna Harraway's classic "Manifesto for Cyborgs,"[2] Tatsumi writes: "Just as the Emperor has survived postwar life as a cyborgian chimera, so too have the Japanese people all become cyborgs—what I refer to as 'Japanoids'—transforming a once divine nation into a monstrously hybrid one" (25). Japanese postwar subjectivity itself has evolved from eating metal and thus is fundamentally split by the intercession of the inorganic.

Readers familiar with such poststructuralist thinkers as Foucault, Barthes, Derrida, and Lacan will already be aware of this concept of the split subject, which states that identity is never whole because it is constructed around a kernel of absolute, inhuman otherness. Therefore, exploring the limits of the human involves

negotiation with an internal nonhuman: this insight goes to the core of Tatsumi's argument in *Full Metal Apache.* His comparative analysis of American orientalism and Japanese occidentalism moves from the old dynamic of exoticism and imitation, respectively, into the realm of synchronicity, in which he finds strange points of connection between these seemingly opposite doctrines (12). The book's final movement elucidates what he calls the new exotic, which comprises "the multicultural and transgeneric poetics of chaotic negotiation" (176).

The bulk of this last section is an extended analysis of the work of Kobayashi Erika, especially her first novella, "Neversoapland." This appears as a refreshing if brief interlude, since *Full Metal Apache* includes disappointingly few analyses of works by women. In fact, except for brief mentions of well-known science fiction authors like Octavia Butler and James Tiptree Jr. (pseudonym of Alice B. Sheldon), women writers or artists are disregarded entirely. It's a disappointing lapse. To name just two examples: Linda Nagata, in her four nanotechnology novels,[3] and Maureen F. McHugh, in her wonderful *China Mountain Zhang* and *Nekropolis,*[4] both employ the motifs of cyberpunk to explore multicultural subjectivity and technological human hybridity in ways that match the final arc of Tatsumi's analysis.

This lapse aside, the key point of *Full Metal Apache*'s paradigm of the new exotic is that Tatsumi does not argue for either an ongoing convergence or a built-in separation between Japan and the United States. No grand narratives pull the two countries together or push them apart: such overarching themes belong to an earlier era of exotification and imitation. Therefore, when Larry McCaffrey hails the book's readers as "fellow Japanoids" in his foreword to *Full Metal Apache,* he uses the term inaccurately (xi). Japanoids are not presented as a model for all humanity. However, there is a way in which Tatsumi's analysis of this "monstrously hybrid" identity provides an important clue for developing and future cross-cultural relations.

According to Thomas Kim, the exotic objects collected in the West a hundred years ago concealed an untamed Other in their depths; the process of bringing them inside the home, therefore, creates the possibility of certain uncanny "destabilizations in the time and space of the self and its attendant culture even as it ostensibly promises self-aggrandizement."[5] In *Full Metal Apache,* Tatsumi suggests a new manifestation of the uncanny encounter between self and other. While the prior doctrines of exoticization and imitation allowed twentieth-century Westerners to feel self-aggrandizement, and granted to postwar Japanese the subversive power of creative masochism, Tatsumi's new exotic is a clarion call to allow this discomforting encounter to happen without taking refuge in feelings of either superiority or inferiority.

Therefore, the connection Tatsumi articulates between Americans and Japanese has nothing to do with the two groups identifying with each other. Instead, his concept of the new exotic avoids racist appropriations of the Other by proposing a postmodern subjectivity constructed by a mutual but separate convergence with the inorganic, or nonhuman. Tatsumi's plea to "Always exoticize!" I believe, calls on readers of *Full Metal Apache* to explore their relation to others by performatively enacting a cyborg identity that defiantly displays the internal, nonhuman limits of the human.

Notes

1. Thomas W. Kim, "Being Modern: The Circulation of Oriental Objects," *American Quarterly* 58 (2006): 383.

2. Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s," *Socialist Review* 15, no. 2 (1985): 65–108.

3. Linda Nagata, *The Bohr Maker* (New York: Bantam Spectra, 1995); *Tech-Heaven* (New York: Bantam Spectra, 1995); *Deception Well* (New York: Bantam Spectra, 1997); *Vast* (New York: Bantam Spectra, 1998).

4. Maureen F. McHugh, *China Mountain Zhang* (New York: Tor Books, 1992); *Nekropolis* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001).

5. Kim, "Being Modern," 380, n. 1.

Postmodern Is Old Hat: *Samurai Champloo*

WILLIAM L. BENZON

Samurai chanpur. TV series, 2004–2005. Watanabe Shin'ichirō (director). Translated as *Samurai Champloo*. 7-DVD box set. Geneon Entertainment (USA) Inc., 2006. AISN B000FC2EXE.

Watanabe Shin'ichirō's twenty-six-episode *Samurai Champloo* is seductive, tempting the sophisticated critic to read it in terms of postmodern eclecticism, cultural hybridity, and self-consciousness. A more sophisticated critic, or perhaps one utterly lacking in such sophistication, knows better. It is not that *Champloo* does not exhibit those signs of postmodern times; it does. Very much so. Casually so. So casually, that one suspects Watanabe is up to something else.

Like Watanabe's previous series, the very popular *Cowboy Bebop* (1998–99, *Kaubōi bibappu*), *Champloo* is episodic and centers on a small group of misfits thrown together at the margins of society. Mugen is an ex-pirate who looks like Spike from *Bebop*, wears pants that look like long baggy b-boy[1] shorts, and has a wickedly eclectic fighting style. Jin is a rōnin who wears Armani eyeglasses, dresses traditionally, and fights in an equally effective but highly traditional style. Fuu has worked as a waitress and is searching for an unidentified samurai who smells like sunflowers. She saves Mugen and Jin from ignominious execution in the first episode and thereby enlists their aid in her search.

Like *Bebop*'s, *Champloo*'s mise en scène is culturally eclectic. But the mix is different. *Bebop* is set in the future and in space: mostly Mars, its moons, and asteroids. As the title suggests, the music leans towards jazz even as the plot and imagery invokes the Old West. *Champloo* is set in early modern Japan, though the exact time period is radically indeterminate. The title theme is hip-hop, and hip-hop occurs in the soundtrack, imagery, and thematics.

Champloo is also anachronistic, and therein resides its genius. We see this in the title sequence, which combines traditional Japanese paintings, drawings, and lettering with thoroughly modern graphic styling. Anachronism is pounded home in the opening segments of the first episode. We see Jin and Mugen bound and in position for decapitation; the sound track has no music, just spoken words of condemnation from the executioner and defiance from Jin and Mugen. The second segment is introduced with the title "one day earlier," followed by a contemporary street scene: a graffiti-covered wall in the background and a b-boy ambling right-to-left across the screen to the discordant hip-hop soundtrack. Then, STOP, and rewind. As the b-boy moves backward, left-to-right, time accelerates backward as the buildings, dress, and modes of transport become older and older. In the compass of 81 frames, this two-seconds-plus sequence returns us to Tokugawa Japan. *Now* we learn how Mugen and Jin met Fuu and how she saved their lives.

Rather than either summarize the action or comment on miscellaneous moments, actions, themes, and motifs across the entire series, I will comment on two episodes only. Each involves an anachronistic encounter between Japan and America, but only one is staged that way. Episode 18 is set in Hiroshima and is about graffiti, the written word, old debts, and Andy Warhol. Episode 23 is about a baseball game in which a Japanese pick-up team defeats the crew of an American warship visiting from the nineteenth century and captained by Alexander Cartwright, who formalized the rules of baseball for the New York Knickerbockers. Let's start with 23 and finish with 18.

Those of us born and raised in America know that baseball is an American sport. It is a familiar part of our world, this national pastime. We watch baseball games on television and in person, and we play the game too, though mostly when young. It is not something foreign and exotic.

The odd thing is, that is also pretty much how it is for those of us born and raised in Japan, where the game has been played since the late nineteenth century. Sure, we know that sometime in the dim past, before any living Japanese was born, the game came here from America. But that knowledge is distant and remote compared to our personal experience of the game. It is not something foreign and exotic. It is as Japanese as sailor suits for schoolgirls.

In episode 23, the two teams make a striking contrast as they take the field. The American team is dressed in light-grey baseball uniforms. To a first approximation, *they all look alike*. In contrast, the Japanese team is highly individualized. Mugen, Jin, and Fuu dress as they always do, as does the doddering old man, the manager, Fuu's pet flying squirrel, and an akita. The last two, of course, do not normally wear clothing and do not deviate from normality on this occasion. When the akita gets up to bat, holding the bat between his teeth, he gets three balls—his strike zone is so narrow that it is impossible to pitch to it. Fourth time, he's hit by the pitch and runs away yelping, followed by the very sensible squirrel. Then the game gets nasty. The Americans decide to cheat, and do so very well. But Mugen's fierce pitching levels the American players one by one. At the end of the first inning he's the only player standing. The Japanese thus win by forfeit as the Americans no longer have a team in the game.

What's the point of this anti-game of baseball? The point is ontological, not in the deep sense of the ultimate constituents of the universe but in a sense studied by cognitive scientists such as Frank Keil[2] about how we perceive and understand differences between animate and inanimate, human and animal, and so forth.

These differences are amply displayed, or made manifest, to use a phrase from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (proposition 6.522), in this game. That one team is uniformed and the other is not makes visible the nature of teamhood and, by extension, of collective actors such as corporations or governmental agencies. The distinction between animal and human within the Japanese team foregrounds the animal within the human, a concept at once traditional in both Eastern and Western cultures as well as modern—think of Freud or modern neuroscience. All of these differences, these ontological categories, are encompassed within the game, which thus becomes a microcosm of the larger world, as games are wont to do. In this context, it hardly matters just where this game was invented. That is a mere contingency irrelevant to the metaphysical lesson being imparted.

The lesson in episode 18, though metaphysical in character, is also about society and history. On the one hand, it turns out that Mugen is illiterate; he spends much of the episode learning to read and write. On the other hand, a dojo where Jin had studied has been inherited by the sons of Jin's master after the master had been forced into poverty and then ritual suicide by the *daimyō* of Hiroshima. The sons head up gangs that compete through tagging, i.e., painting graffiti on public buildings and other surfaces. Tagging is not, of course, a Tokugawa activity, but it is important in the hip-hop culture that saturates *Champloo*'s contemporary ambience. While hip-hop, and tagging too, originated in America, both went international more than two decades ago. Although considerably newer than baseball, neither are any more specifically American than baseball.

Fuu suggests that the feuding brothers settle their conflict through a contest: the gang that tags the most difficult spot wins. They agree, but *Mugen* wins the contest rather than either gang. He's learned to read and write and, in his enthusiasm for these newfound skills, tags his way up

the façade of Hiroshima castle and paints his personal symbol on the roof; it looks like the conventional mathematical sign for infinity. Note that, in Japanese, *mu* means absence, and, as the infinite is without limit, Mugen's name is thus consonant with his symbol.

What, then, do we make of this? I would like to turn to Eiko Ikegami's recent *Bonds of Civility*,[3] which is a study of networks of artistic activity during the Tokugawa period. Ikegami argues that individuals who were assigned different stations by the shogunate would temporarily "escape" that structure in the pursuit of poetry, flower arranging, the tea ceremony, theater, painting, and so forth. Samurai, merchants, farmers, and others were thus able to meet and interact as equals in these aesthetic activities. Over the centuries, these informal institutions forged a civil society "that generated an image of aesthetic Japan as if it had been a natural description of the geographical identity called Japan" (375). In the late nineteenth century, this identity coalesced around the figure of the emperor when the nation in general, and the shogunate in particular, was forced to adapt to Western imperialism (372–76).

Now let us return to *Samurai Champloo*. Fuu, Mugen, and Jin are all interstitial individuals with respect to the shogunate; they have no place in that system. The series as a whole is deeply concerned with artistic activities, having episodes devoted to painting, kabuki, poetry (rap), and music. Fuu, Mugen, Jin, and their activities embody the networks of aesthetic civility that forged Japanese identity. When in episode 18 Mugen paints his symbol on the roof of Hiroshima castle—the *daimyō*'s residence—that act symbolizes the ascendance of the informal order of aesthetic civility over the formal order of the shogunate's hierarchies. This episode thus embodies and recapitulates the forces that, in Ikegami's analysis, underpin the ultimate emergence of modern Japanese identity in the late nineteenth century.

But, if that is so, then where in this episode do we find a representative of Western imperialism prompting the Japanese reflexively to assert and elaborate a specifically *Japanese* identity? There isn't one, but one character comes tantalizingly close. Episode 18 is framed by voice-overs about fashion and the street, delivered by one Uhori, who is clearly modeled after Andy Warhol. Warhol was one of the best-known figures in the contemporary art world. Although he was American, that is merely a matter of place of birth and residence. Culturally, he was a transnational force and remains a transnational icon.

Thus in both of these episodes national origins are asserted (baseball) or implied (Andy Warhol), only to be rendered irrelevant to the central action. If we read the entire series as an extended parable about the mechanisms of culture and society, this parable clearly subordinates national identity to the agency of its individual actors, most centrally, Fuu, Mugen, and Jin. *Samurai Champloo* thus goes beyond subverting postmodern interventions into culture, identity, antihegemonic subalterns, and so forth. Watanabe renders such critical expostulation irrelevant, not by ignoring the various systems his protagonists must negotiate but by recognizing that their imaginative agency is ultimately more powerful than those systems.

The postmodern critic works hard to reveal national identity as an ideological fiction. But, paradoxically, the success of that enterprise serves only to wed it ever more firmly to the fact of such identity, thereby making identity one fulcrum on which the postmodern critic turns an argument. By contrast, Watanabe sets his story in a world where national identity had yet to coalesce in its modern form. Watanabe can then introduce national identity into his narrative though anachronistic gestures—such as the baseball-playing crew of an American warship or a pop-art figure of American descent—where such identity contributes to his story as but one among many attributes of individuals and their motives.

In the context of Watanabe's freely imagined Tokugawa Japan, the social and ideological formations of nationhood do not dominate anything. They are just another component in the mise en scène. Artists like Watanabe Shin'ichirō are ahead of the critical game. It is time we listened to them rather than to the voices of criticisms past.

Notes

1. "B-boy" is hip-hop slang for a devoted fan of hip-hop culture. It is a shortened form of "break-boy" where "break" derives from break dancing, the martial arts inflected dance style that arose with hip-hop.

2. Frank C. Keil, *Concepts, Kinds, and Cognitive Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).

3. Eiko Ikegami, *Bonds of Civility: Aesthetic Networks and the Political Origins of Japanese Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

トレンド
Torendo
Giant Robots and Superheroes: Manifestations of Divine Power, East and West
An Interview with Crispin Freeman

FRENCHY LUNNING

During the 2006 session of the annual Schoolgirls and Mobilesuits: Culture and Creation in Anime and Manga (SGMS) at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Crispin Freeman, the very popular and well-known anime voice actor, advanced some thoughtful and provocative ideas concerning the mythic and religious roots of American comic book superheroes and the giant robots of anime and manga. His presentation, titled "Giant Robots and Superheroes: Manifestations of Divine Power," inspired us to think about the difference between the ways scholars and actors view these works and their cultural context, and we were interested in hearing more. In the following e-mail interview with Frenchy Lunning, Freeman discussed the actor's perspective and his own ideas about superheroes, giant robots, and notions of the divine.

FRENCHY LUNNING: Crispin, your key concept originated from a notion that these cultural icons—superheroes and giant robots—are rooted in the religious and mythological foundations of the cultures that produced them. So to begin, how do you understand mythological concepts when as an actor you inhabit these characters in such a deeply mysterious and profoundly intuitive way in order to deliver the psychic knowledge of a character in performance? More simply, how has your experience as the actor determined your ideas on these key icons in popular culture?

CRISPIN FREEMAN: That's a big question! Let's start with how my experience as an actor informs my understanding of mythology. Later I can talk about how that led to my views on mythological storytelling and specifically giant robots and superheroes in animation.

In a lecture entitled *The Way of Art,* Joseph Campbell talks about the similarities between the artist and the mystic: "The way of the mystic and the way of the artist are very much alike except that the mystic does not have a craft. The craft holds the artist to the world and the mystic goes off through his psyche into the transcendent. The artist is going to many of the same places, but he is held to the world [by his craft]."[1]

The religious mystic is trying to achieve an experience of radical unity with the divine. He is reaching for an ecstatic state that goes beyond rational understanding. It is a state of bliss that can only be hinted at in descriptions and metaphors. In the end, mystical unity with the divine

eludes any attempt to conceptualize it because it must be experienced, not described, in order to truly be understood. For me, the acting process is very similar. As an actor, I am trying to embody the essence or truth of a character and become one with him. Initially, I try to conceptualize the character. I look to many places to build my idea of the character. I study the story, I get insight from the director and I look within myself to my own experiences of life to see what part of me responds to the character and his situation. All of this conceptual work is my craft and it helps prime the instinctive part of me. However, conceptualizing a character is not enough in order to perform a role. Once I've made my decisions about a character, I then have to switch gears and play pretend in order to embody that character. When you conceptualize a character you are holding them at arm's length; you are subject and the character is object. In order to play a character you have to close that conceptual distance and become that character. When I am playing a role like Alucard in *Hellsing* (2001–02, *Herushingu*), I don't say to myself, "I'm now *playing* Alucard," I say to myself, "I *am* Alucard."

The mystic is also trying to go past religious conceptions in order to actually experience the divine. The primary difference between a mystic and myself are our goals. The mystic is attempting to achieve his experience for his own enlightenment and bliss, which is personal and private. He may share his insights later, but the mystic goes on his journey alone. As an actor, I am attempting to share this mystical experience in a public way with an audience in order to communicate an artistic truth to them.

An actor can come up with a great "idea" about a character or scene that seems perfect in theory but in practice falls flat. In this way, performance becomes a great litmus test for the validity of your analytical choices. As Duke Ellington said, "If it sounds good, it is good." The corollary to that rule is that if it doesn't sound good, it isn't good, even if it conforms to some "perfect" idea. When creating art, practice must trump theory in order to communicate to an audience. The best way to insult an artist is to ask them what their art means. If the revelation has to be explained, it's not a revelation.

When I was studying acting in graduate school, I had an artistic crisis of sorts. None of my work seemed to be communicating. The head of the program pulled me aside and said, "Crispin, you look good, you speak well, and you move gracefully. Why am I not always interested?" I realized that I was performing "correctly," but I wasn't communicating. I knew the path analytically, but I wasn't willing to walk it emotionally. I had to ask myself what I cared about and what communicated to me. Luckily, I came across Joseph Campbell's work on comparative mythology. Campbell was able to articulate what I had always been attracted to instinctively and he gave me the tools and the grammar to analyze story and myth. His work was a great starting point for my ongoing study of mythological storytelling, from both the analytical and instinctive perspectives.

FL: Fascinating. So how has what you learned from this creative process informed your particular thesis about the relationship between religion and mythology?

CF: I'm fond of Joseph Campbell's definition of mythology. In his lecture entitled *Man and Myth,* Campbell starts his talk by saying that most people think of mythology as other people's religion. He counters that religion is often misunderstood mythology.[2]

In Campbell's view, any living mythology can be broken into four aspects: the mystical, the cosmological, the sociological, and the pedagogical. The mystical aspect of mythology is that sense of cosmic awe when one realizes the scope and nature and mystery of the universe. It is the feeling that overwhelms the ego when viewing something of massive scale or power. It is the understanding and more importantly

the experience of the universe as a huge and mysterious place. This invariably leads to the second aspect of mythology: cosmology. This is the attempt to conceptualize and organize that mystery of the universe into a form that the human conscious mind can relate to. Whether the world rides on the back of a turtle, or it was created in six days by an omnipotent god, or the phenomenal world is in fact all an illusion, each conception of the universe is the cosmology of that mythology.

The sociological aspect of myth offers a way to organize the structure of society. Many times this sociological structure mirrors the cosmological one. People may rest on the same day the divinity rested. Rulers who are identified with celestial phenomenon may be buried alive when their cosmological counterparts cycle through the constellations. Still other cultures regard their ritual sacrifices as necessary for ensuring that the seasons will continue so that life can survive. The final aspect of myth is the pedagogical, or psychological, one. Mythology also imparts personal lessons and teachings about how to live your life. These values are harmonized with the three other aspects of mythology to create a synergistic whole. All four aspects work together to create a metaphor for the universe. This metaphor helps both individuals and society lead a satisfying and complete existence that is appropriate to that religious tradition.

Campbell once summed up mythology this way: "It's an organization of symbolic forms, images, and narratives that are metaphoric of the possibilities of human experience and fulfillment in a given society at a given time."[3] Many mythologies share certain values. The anthropologist Adolf Bastian called these shared values "elementary ideas." Campbell's book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* outlines some of these similarities by looking at archetypal hero journeys from mythologies around the world.

However, there are also some very distinct differences between mythologies. Bastian called these the "folk ideas," or notions of mythology that are tied to a certain location or a certain culture. I am interested in the differences in cosmological outlook between the Abrahamic traditions in America and the Shintō and Buddhist traditions in Japan. I find it fascinating how the different religious traditions of each country manifest in their animated storytelling. I especially find it interesting how superheroes seem to manifest the value systems of Abrahamic traditions while giant robots tend to reveal their Shintō and Buddhist backgrounds.

FL: So what was it that brought you to the specific conclusion that these cultural icons were influenced by religious traditions?

CF: In January 1999, I was fortunate enough to attend an Anime Symposium at the Japan Society in New York City. It was a gathering of artists, scholars and producers who had come to discuss anime and manga, not only from a critical and historical perspective but from a creative standpoint as well. The guests included Oshii Mamoru, director of *Ghost in the Shell* (1995, *Kōkaku Kidōtai*), Frederick Schodt, a prolific writer and manga translator, and a producer by the name of Uchida Kenji. At the time, Mr. Uchida was working for Sunrise, a division of Bandai Entertainment. During his presentation at the symposium he said something very interesting: "In America, when you want to make something stronger than a human being, you make a superhero. In Japan, when you want to make something stronger than a human being, you make a giant robot." Most of the audience chuckled at his comment but I was intrigued. My hand shot up. I asked him the reason for this difference. He answered that it was because America and Japan had different concepts of "god." He went on to say that in America, God is anthropomorphized. The God of the Bible is thought of as a person, and we are "made in His image." It would make sense then that an American superbeing would manifest itself in human form.

In Japan, he said, the situation is quite different. There, the traditional concept of god comes from Shintō, the indigenous, animistic, and polytheistic religion of Japan. In Shintō, the concept of god or *kami* is much more malleable. The Sun, Mount Fuji, and other natural phenomenon are worshipped as *kami*. Ancestors are also venerated as *kami*. Until the last century, the Emperor was honored as *kami*. *Kami* can be thought of both personally, as in the case of ancestor worship, and impersonally, in the case of deifying natural phenomena.

Uchida explained that in anime, the giant robot comes from this more protean and elemental notion of divine energy. Supernatural power can manifest itself in a mechanical form that may be humanoid in shape and may even demonstrate some human qualities, but it is certainly not human. It is the personification of a divine force that is elemental in nature. Not only are these godlike beings in Japan distinct from those in America; the worlds they live in are based on radically different views of the cosmos. These cosmologies lead heroes from each culture to struggle for different values. It is this contrast between both the nature and the cosmology of heroes that I find so fascinating.

For me, superheroes, especially those created in the golden age of comics in the 1930s and '40s, are manifestations of Abrahamic ideals and values. While America has no official national religion, the majority of Americans look to Judeo-Christian faiths for their religious and mythological worldview. Most are Christians of one type or another and their concept of God comes from the Old and New Testament. It says in Genesis that "God created man in his own image."[4] The New Testament proclaims Jesus of Nazareth to be the Son of God, divinity made flesh: "I and my Father are one."[5] Superheroes embody this notion of divine power. They too are supernatural forces in human form. In many ways they resemble the ancient Greek gods, each one the physical manifestation of a different incredible power. However, there is a difference in intention between Greek gods and superheroes. Greek gods act a lot like humans: they fight, make up, get jealous, and act to satisfy their personal needs and desires. Greek gods simply have more power at their disposal than normal humans. Superheroes, on the other hand, struggle for a common good. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. They are do-gooders and they instinctively know that they must vanquish evildoers. In this way, they reflect the qualities of the divine power that inspired them: the monotheistic creator God described in the Bible. Superman is the iconic example of this type.

FL: So let's get to the cool stuff: how has the knowledge of these different origins and cultural differences between Western superheroes and Japanese giant robots affected your understanding and articulation of the giant robot pilot as an actor, especially since you are creating Eastern characters from a Western point of view? This is important, I think, as a way of understanding how the actor merges his own experience and study to create characters that are so fully present for us.

CF: It's funny you ask that since I recently had the opportunity to play the voice of Superman in the *Justice League: Heroes* video game. My take on Superman is that he is the most sincere person on Earth. There isn't a dissembling bone in his alien body. He displays many characteristics reminiscent of the Abrahamic God. First, Superman is inherently benevolent. He has an unfailing sense of righteousness and always acts with the best of intentions. While he may become angry or frustrated, he is not, generally speaking, tortured by a "dark side" that tempts him to sin. He is resolute in his neverending battle for "Truth, Justice, and the American Way." Second, he possesses nearly limitless power, making him almost omnipotent. Eventually, Superman writers had to invent Kryptonite in order to give him any vulnerability at all. Third,

Superman seems to possess vast knowledge. Whenever he flies to some far off destination, he has an uncanny sense of direction, even if his destination is another planet. He never lacks the correct solution to any crisis. His mastery of scientific principles and his ability to use his powers to gain his desired effect on the physical world is amazing. Superman is not omniscient, but he exhibits many attributes that indicate he is mentally superior to a terrestrial human.

When I play Superman, I do my best to capture that purity of intention. I imagine myself as someone who truly believes every word that he is saying. My Superman has no subtext, he says what he means and means what he says. He is the embodiment of honesty. My point of view on the character came through in my audition and greatly influenced the director's decision to cast me as the Man of Steel. Later, one of the game developers at Warner Bros. who was working extensively on the project admitted to me that he had never really much cared for the character of Superman. He found him trite. He told me that my portrayal of Superman gave him a new appreciation for the character.

There comes a point in the game where Superman becomes extremely wrathful. Since Superman is completely benevolent, I interpreted his rage as a righteous, sincere anger. In those scenes I tried to portray the fury that comes from a first betrayal or the loss of innocence. The focus of that anger is the villain of the game. The solution is simple: for the all-good Superman to vanquish his opponent, the completely evil supervillain, whether that villain is Lex Luthor, Brainiac, or Darkseid.

The setup is very different in a giant robot anime show like *The Big O* (1999–2000, *The Biggu Ō*), which I was also fortunate enough to work on. Ironically, many of the symbols in *The Big O* are very Abrahamic, but the underlying structure of the show reveals a more Japanese sensibility. The protagonist, Roger Smith, is not a superhero trying to vanquish his enemies, rather he is a negotiator trying to find terms that everyone can live with. This is more in keeping with a cosmology that seeks balance rather than a victory of "good" over "evil." Every episode of *The Big O* ends with a title that tells you how the episode has been resolved: either "we have come to terms," meaning that an agreement has been reached, or "no side," meaning that there has been no clear victor. Sometimes Roger's negotiation techniques are quite forceful and require the aid of his Megadeus, Big O. The term "Megadeus" is a combination of the Greek word *mega* meaning "big" and the Latin word *deus* meaning "god." The giant robot, Big O, is therefore a "Big God." However, Big O is not the monotheistic god of the Abrahamic tradition. Big O is one god among many and is closer to the notion of Shintō *kami*. There is a longstanding tradition in anime of giving giant robots divine names, designating them *kami* of sorts.[6] We meet many other Megadeuses as *The Big O* progresses, including Big Duo and Big Fau. Each Megadeus has its own pilot. The pilot of a Megadeus is referred to as a Dominus, which in Latin means "Lord." Each pilot is the "Lord" of his own "Big God." Because Roger Smith chooses to protect Paradigm City, his Megadeus, Big O, serves much the same purpose that a regional guardian *kami* provides in traditional Shintō. Big O can be interpreted as a powerful *kami* that Roger Smith synchronizes with in order to safeguard his home.

In the second season of the show, I play the cunning and vicious Alan Gabriel who attempts to use Big Duo to destroy Big O and kill Roger Smith. While acting this role, I learned firsthand what happens when pilot and robot do not synchronize properly. A pilot must become emotionally and spiritually one with a robot in order to properly harness its power. Big O and Roger are bonded so closely that Big O only responds when Roger calls. The character Angel in the show even refers to Big O as Roger's "alter ego." Big O and Big Duo both test their pilots for synchronization with the phrase "Cast in the name of god, ye not guilty." Unfortunately for

Alan Gabriel, when Big Duo tests for synchronization, Alan is found "guilty."

While the language of synchronization in *The Big O* sounds biblical, the relationship between pilot and robot is certainly not. Because the show is not set in a dualistic Abrahamic paradigm, there is nothing inherently good or evil about these Megadeuses; they are simply supernatural forces in robot form. The morality of their actions is determined by their pilot's intentions, so long as the pilot believes his cause to be noble. The quality of nobility is a primary characteristic of *kami* in Shintō. Like most giant robots in anime, the spiritual nature of a Megadeus is closer to the concept of "noble *kami*" than to the completely benevolent and omnipotent Abrahamic God. Big Duo's original pilot, Schwarzwald, attempts to use his Megadeus to reveal a "truth." Because this intention is noble, Big Duo is willing to aid Schwarzwald in his efforts, even if Roger Smith thinks those efforts are misguided. Alan Gabriel wants only to destroy. I would argue that Big Duo resists Alan Gabriel's attempt to kill Roger because there is no nobility or "truth" in Alan's intentions. Big Duo sees nothing high-minded or truthful in senselessly destroying a Megadeus and its Dominus. Instead, it turns on Alan Gabriel. As Big Duo smothers Alan in cockpit control cables, Schwarzwald explains the nature of a Megadeus: "A Megadeus chooses its Dominus. . . . It chooses one who controls the power of God created by Man, one who is able to arrive at one truth. That's not the case with you!"

In an inversion of Abrahamic tradition where God creates humanity, Megadeuses like Big Duo are manifestations of the "power of God" but are man-made. However, one cannot dismiss a Megadeus as being nothing more than a powerful man-made machine. Schwarzwald's statement that a Megadeus chooses its Dominus implies that, even though they are not human, Megadeuses are sentient on some level. Big Duo demonstrates that sentience when it decides not to obey Alan Gabriel. Ostensibly, Big Duo does this because Alan has not arrived at the "one truth" Schwarzwald refers to. While the idea of one truth also sounds biblical, later in that episode Roger Smith questions Schwarzwald's interpretation of the necessary criteria for a Dominus. Roger says, "[Schwarzwald] had continually made it his mission in the city to faithfully seek out the truth and report it to the public. . . . I wonder if he knew, when he was betrayed by Big Duo, did he realize then, that there is probably more than one truth?" Our protagonist, arguably the most successful Megadeus pilot in the story, acknowledges that there are many truths, not just one, just as there are many "Big Gods" in Paradigm City.

I was in the sound booth during one of my recording sessions for the Big O, when the voice director, Lia Sargent, asked me about my mythological anime panel that I often do at conventions. She was curious how I got interested in the subject. I told her about my discovery of Joseph Campbell's work, and I related to her my experience at the Anime Symposium. I explained how the producer, Kenji Uchida, had helped articulate for me the religious differences between superheroes and giant robots.

"Uchida?" Lia asked. "He's sitting right next to me."

Everything stopped. I ran out of the booth and Uchida and Lia rushed out of the control room. Uchida and I met in the hall. I thanked him profusely for his insight. He looked me over and said, "I remember you!" He remembered me being the precocious young man at the symposium from four years ago who had pressed him to explain his comment about gods.

"You know," he continued, "there's a lot of mythology in *The Big O*."

"Yes!" I replied. "I'm well aware!" We talked briefly about some of the symbolism in the show, but unfortunately, before we could get too in-depth, we had to get back to work. I'm planning to finish our discussion in the future.

FL: Let's talk more about that Japanese

mythology. The religious traditions you mentioned, Buddhism and Shintō, both have complicated histories, full of national and transnational interventions. How do you understand these religions, and how would you say the giant robots of anime reflect their religio-mythic structure?

CF: Japan's religious tradition contrasts greatly with America's. Buddhism and Shintō are the two dominant religious influences. Shintō is Japan's indigenous nature-worship religion; it dates back to prehistoric times. Buddhism came to Japan via China during the sixth century CE. Unlike Christianity, which requires its adherents to reject other religions, Buddhism tends to synchronize with the local religious traditions of any country to which it is introduced. This was certainly the case in Japan, and, by the eighth century CE, Shintō and Buddhism had found a way to coexist harmoniously. Over the last 1200 years, the two religious traditions have adapted to complement one another. It is not uncommon for Buddhist temples to be constructed as additions onto existing Shintō shrines. While there have been times in Japanese history when both political and ecclesiastical powers have tried to promote one of these religions over the other, every attempt to permanently divide the two traditions has ultimately failed. They are inextricably linked in Japanese culture. Giant robot storytelling owes much of its intention and cosmology to this synthesis of Buddhism and Shintō. This is especially evident in how the giant robot embodies the Shintō concept of god.

Shintō literally means the "Way of the Gods." Shintō *kami* are radically different from the Abrahamic God. *Kami* are divine manifestations of aspects of nature. Sometimes these natural forces are personified, as in the case of the sun goddess Amaterasu. At other times, they may take animal forms. *Kami* may also be worshipped in the form of sacred trees or rocks. In fact, nature and the world itself can be thought of as the offspring or progeny of *kami*. This concept comes from the Shintō story of creation.

Unlike Abrahamic traditions, Shintō cosmology considers the world and everything in it to be manifestations of *kami*, not something separate from them. For followers of Shintō, creator and creation are one and the same. This means that the mystery and majesty of the universe can be found in one's own personal existence. People themselves are *kami*, they just don't always realize their own divine nature. "Man is a child of kami. . . . there is no clear line of distinction between himself and the *kami*. In one sense men are *kami*, in another they will become *kami*."[7]

In Abrahamic traditions, the spiritual goal is to achieve a special relationship with the divine and thereby achieve salvation. In Shintō and Buddhism, the goal is to achieve identification with the divine and thereby gain enlightenment: the realization of one's own divinity and oneness with the universe. This idea of being "one with God" is heresy in Abrahamic faiths; it was one of the reasons why Jesus was persecuted. In Christianity, only Jesus Christ is accepted as both true God and true man. This status is considered a miracle unique to Christ, since to his followers He is the only Son of God. In Shintō, however, everyone is both divine and human. In Buddhism, anyone is capable of becoming a Buddha.

The way I understand it, one of the purposes of Shintō rituals is to realign human beings with *kami*. Rituals that venerate majestic natural phenomenon or honor ancestral spirits help participants attain this realignment. This reconciles the worshipper not only with external *kami* but also puts one in touch with one's own divine essence. Similarly, the goal of Buddhist practice is to align oneself with Buddha-consciousness, achieve enlightenment, and become a Buddha. This also fosters a sense of unity with the cosmos. What is fascinating is that in the world of anime, a protagonist who pilots a giant robot can attain the same goal!

The teachings of the Buddha are often thought of as a vehicle or "ferryboat" that a practitioner uses to carry themselves to the shores of enlightenment. From a Buddhist perspective, a giant robot can also be interpreted as a vehicle to enlightenment. Over the course of a story, a giant robot supports its pilot and helps guide him from a state of confusion and turmoil to a state of spiritual and emotional understanding. Learning how to control the robot is an important part of that journey toward enlightenment. The pilot must internalize the robot's logic and develop identification with it in order to have the complete range of the robot's abilities at his disposal. Over time, pilot and robot begin to work synergistically together. The robot's power then becomes the pilot's power, and the two become inextricably linked. Because the robot is also a manifestation of divine energy, the pilot who learns how to control his robot is not only striving toward a sense of enlightenment, he is also putting himself at one with the forces of the cosmos. This unity with the robot is not only an alignment with divine elemental forces, it is also an alignment with the pilot's own ancestral *kami*. The *kami* in question is usually the pilot's father.

FL: Ah yes, what is this thing with the father? In many giant robot anime, the father's role in the creation of the giant robot is in a contentious, or at least ambiguous, cross-purpose with his parental role in helping the son toward achieving adulthood. How do you see that Shintō and Buddhism inform this example of bad parenting?

CF: One could argue that building a giant robot for your son is the best way to parent them and help them toward adulthood. Traditionally in anime, a giant robot is constructed by a scientist whose son (or grandson) eventually pilots it. The father often dies or becomes inconsequential to the story, leaving his son to figure out the logic and meaning of his creation. This is usually a necessary step in any coming-of-age story: the authority figure must recede in order for the young hero to become the authority for his own life. After a period of experimentation and/or training, the son eventually learns what the robot requires from him as a pilot, as well as his own purpose for using the robot. By understanding his father's creation and putting himself in alignment with it, the pilot becomes "at one" with his father's legacy. This helps the son achieve not only a sense of personal fulfillment but also allows him to unify and/or reconcile with the spirit of his father. Piloting a giant robot satisfies the requirements of an archetypal father-atonement journey: one in which the son can resolve his relationship with his father and move forward into adulthood with a new identity and purpose.

Aligning with a robot's elemental power, while at the same time coming to terms with the legacy of the father who built it, is a twofold ritual essential to the mythology of giant robots. It seems to be a prerequisite for most stories in the genre. This archetypal structure appears in seminal giant robot anime beginning with *Gigantor* (1963–65, *Tetsujin 28-gō*) and is repeated in titles like *Mazinger Z*, *Mobile Suit Gundam* (1979–80, *Kidō Senshi Gandamu*) and *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. The rules of the giant robot genre were so well established by the time *Evangelion* was produced in the mid-1990's that *Eva* not only follows these rules but is able to use the conventions of giant robot storytelling to subvert its audience's expectations!

FL: Thank you, Crispin, for fascinating insight into the unique form of knowledge that can emerge through the creative process. *Mechademia* is dedicated to exploring the many ways of seeing and the many knowledge systems that have formed around these exquisite narratives. You have given us a wonderful look into one of them.

CF: You're very welcome! Thanks for giving me the opportunity to speak with you.

Notes

1. Joseph Campbell, *The Way of Art*, audio lecture (Mystic Fire Audio, 1990).

2. Joseph Campbell, *Man and Myth*, audio lecture, abridged ed. (Highbridge Audio, 2002).

3. Campbell, *The Way of Art*.

4. Gen. 1:27 (King James Version).

5. John 10:30 (King James Version).

6. *Majingaa Z* (1972–74, *Mazinger Z*; also known in its edited English version as *Tranzor Z*), which connotes the name Demon God; *Daikū maryū Gaikingu* (1976–77, Great sky demon dragon Gaiking); *Densetsu kyojin Ideon* (1980–81, *Legendary Giant God Ideon*; also known as *Space Runaway Ideon*); *Rokushin gattai Goddomaazu* (1981–82, *Six God Combination Godmars*); *Goddo Majingaa* (1984, *God Mazinger*); *Chōjū kishin Dankūga* (1985, *Dancougar—Super Beast Machine God*); and *Shinseiki Evangerion* (1995–96, *Neon Genesis Evangelion*), to name just a few.

7. Sokyo Ono, *Shinto: The Kami Way* (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle, 1979), 103.

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CALL FOR PAPERS



The goal of *Mechademia* is to promote critical thinking, writing, and creative activity to bridge the current gap between professional, academic, and fan communities and discourses. This series recognizes the increasing and enriching merger in the artistic and cultural exchange between Asian and Western cultures. We seek contributions to *Mechademia* by artists and authors from a wide range of backgrounds. Contributors endeavor to write across disciplinary boundaries, presenting unique knowledge in all its sophistication but with a broad audience in mind.

The focus of *Mechademia* is manga and anime, but we do not see these just as objects. Rather, their production, distribution, and reception continue to generate connective networks manifest in an expanding spiral of art, aesthetics, history, culture, and society. Our subject area extends from anime and manga into game design, fan/subcultural/conspicuous fashion, graphic design, commercial packaging, and character design as well as fan-based global practices influenced by and influencing contemporary Asian popular cultures. This list in no way exhausts the potential subjects for this series.

Manga and anime are catalysts for the emergence of networks, fan groups, and communities of knowledge fascinated by and extending the depth and influence of these works. This series intends to create new links between these different communities, to challenge the hegemonic flows of information, and to acknowledge the broader range of professional, academic, and fan communities of knowledge rather than accept their current isolation.

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January 1, 2009 "Fanthropologies"

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Submissions should be in the form of a Word document attached to an e-mail message sent to Frenchy Lunning, editor of *Mechademia*, at frenchy_lunning@mcad.edu. *Mechademia* is published annually in the fall.